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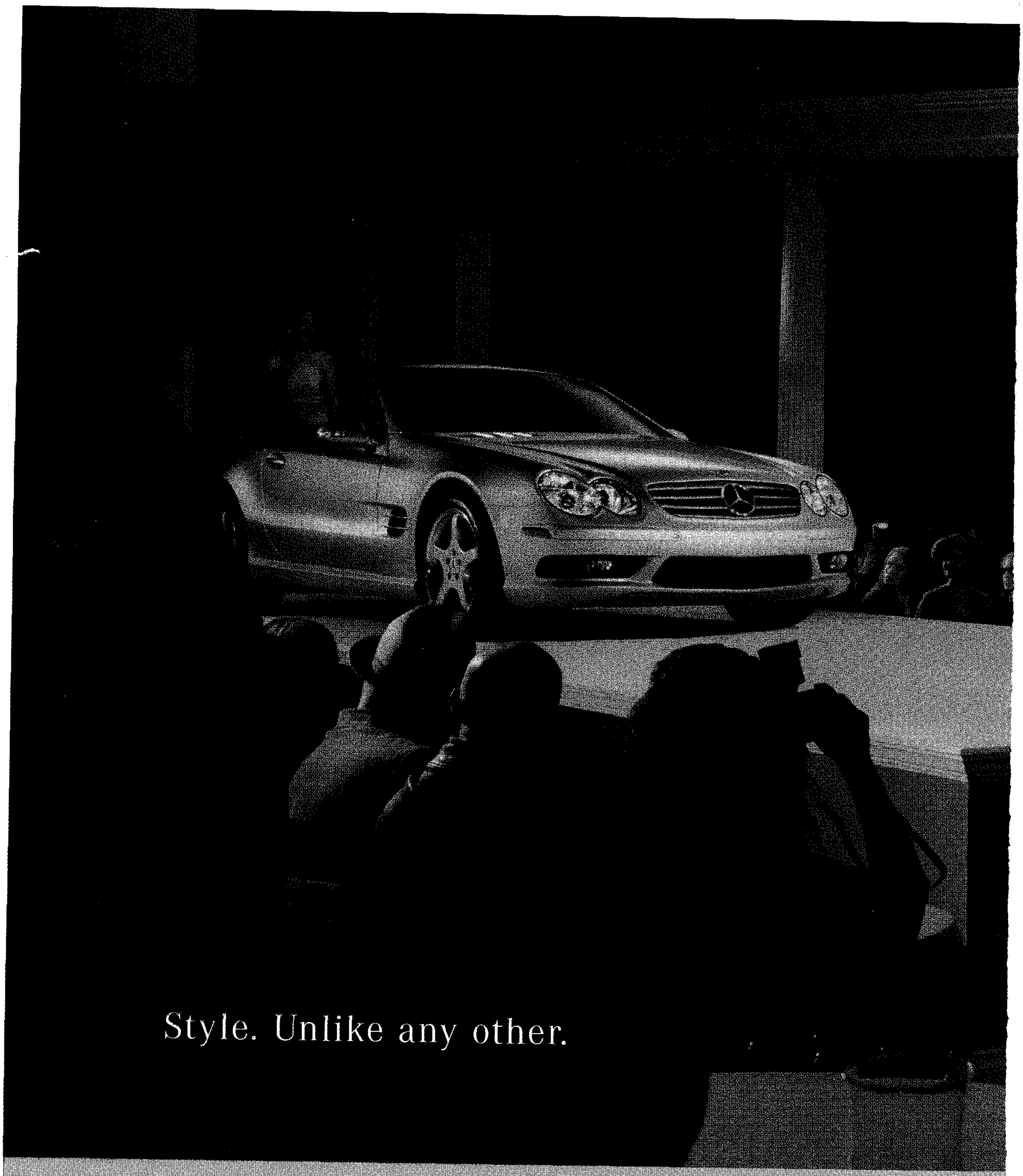
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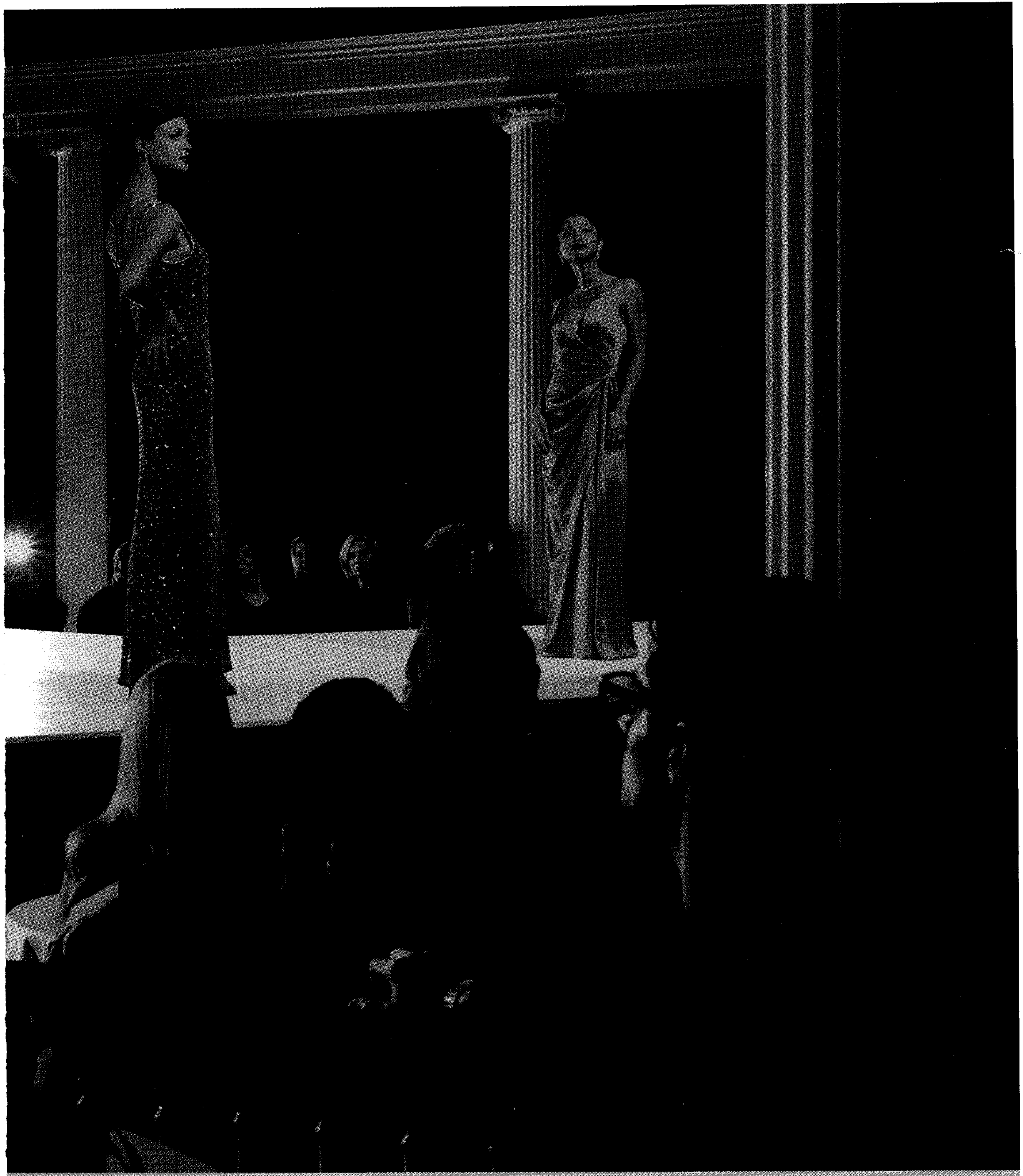

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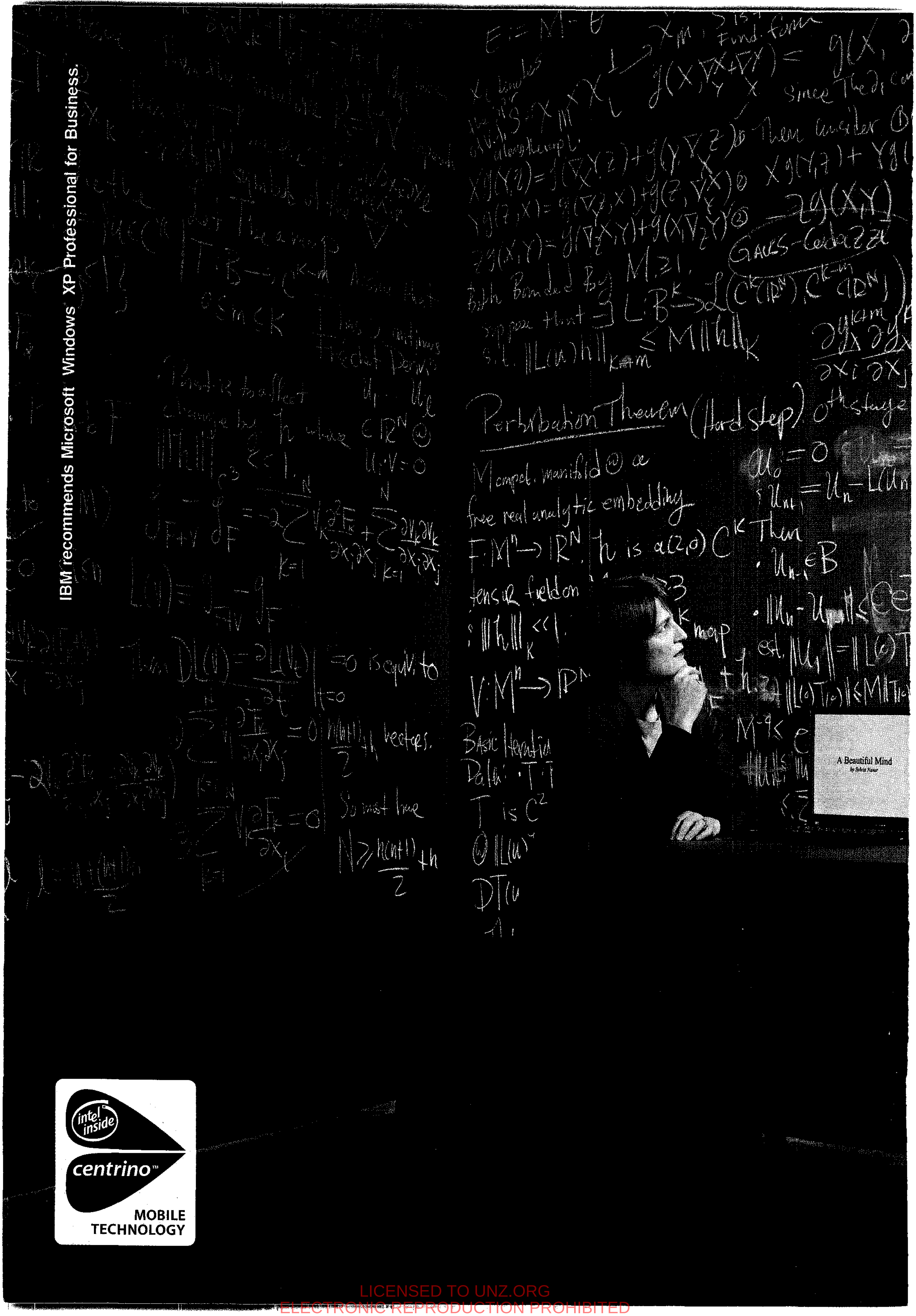
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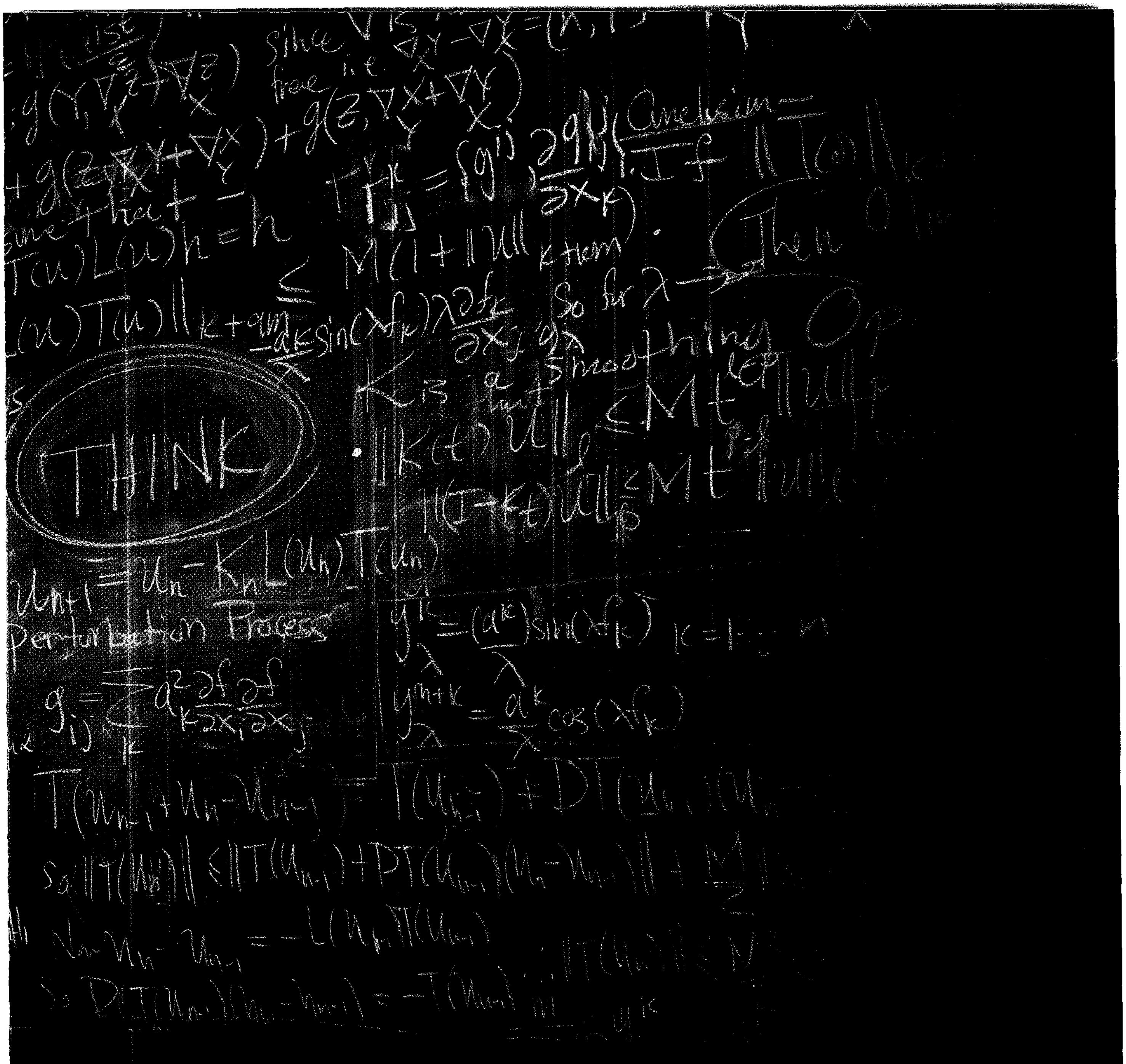

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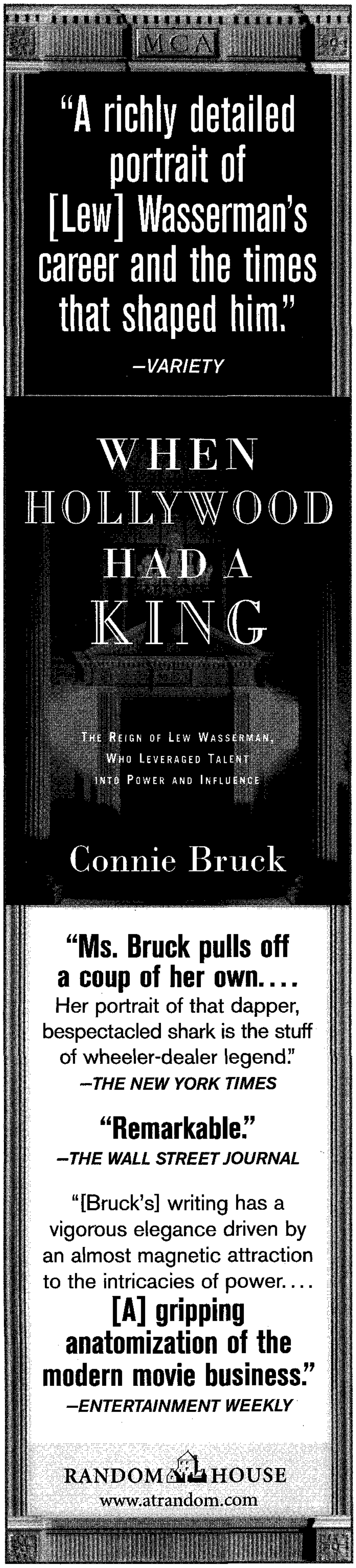

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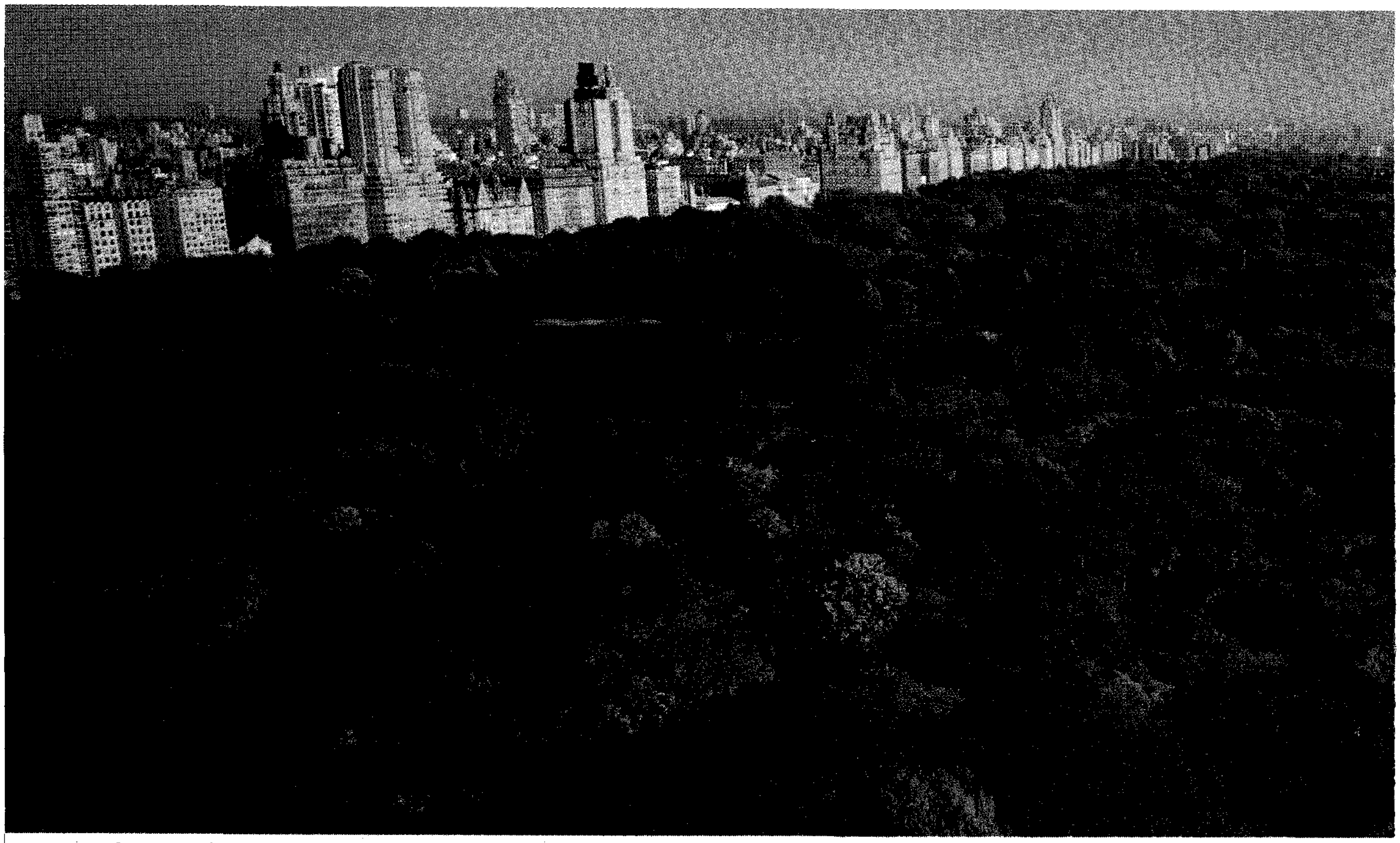

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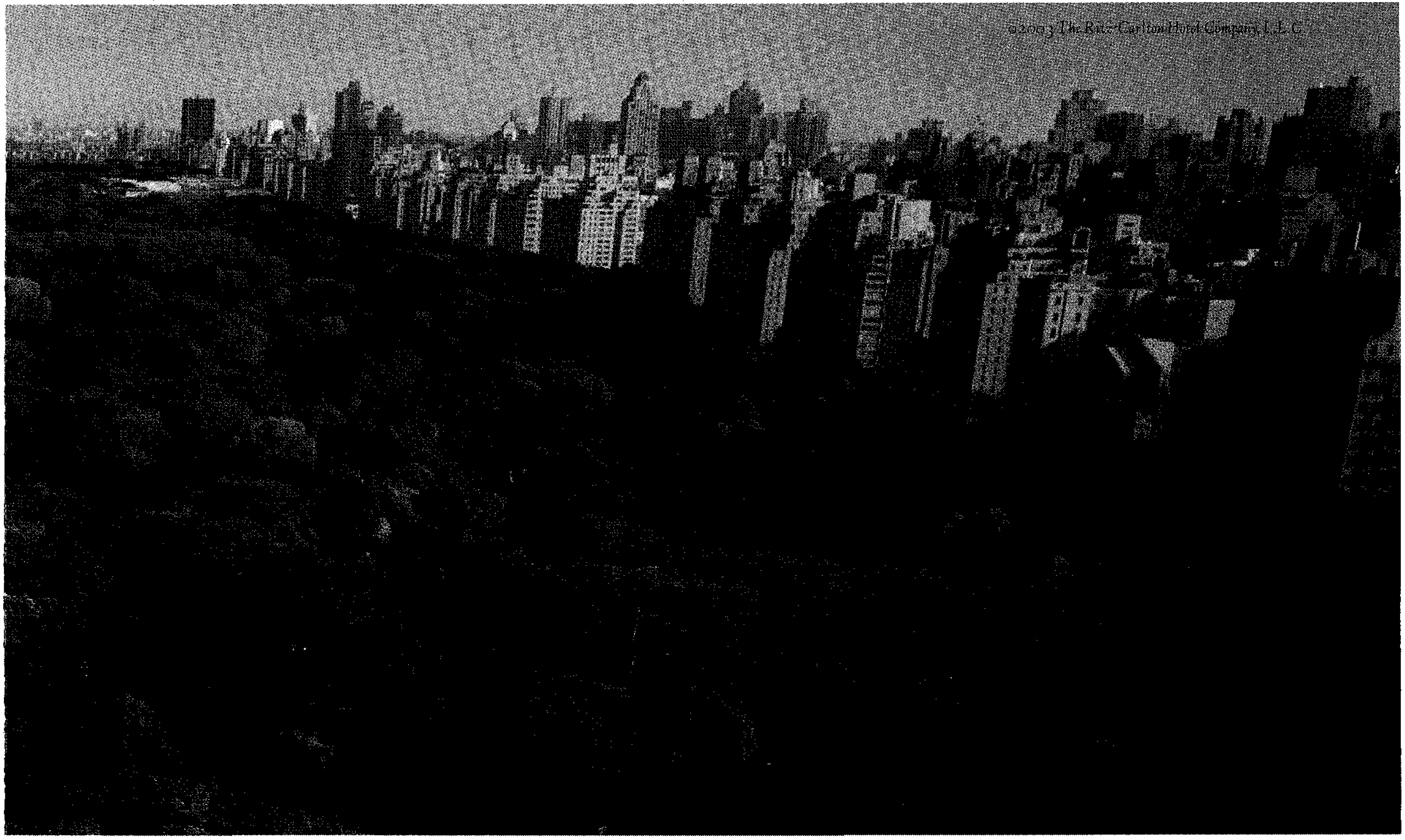

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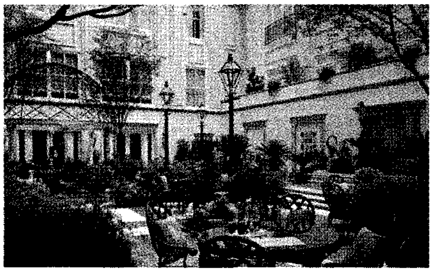

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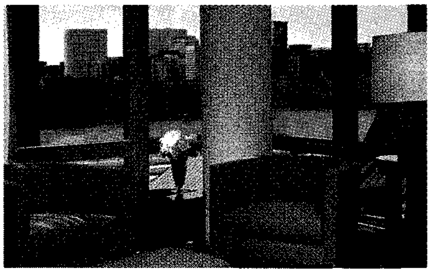

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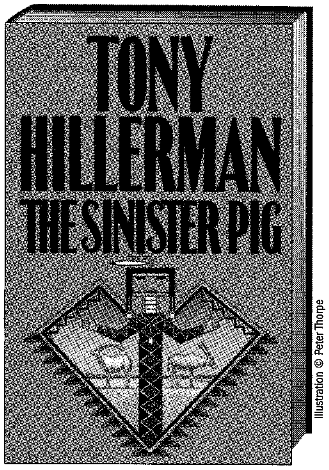

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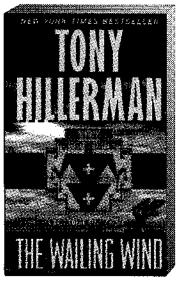

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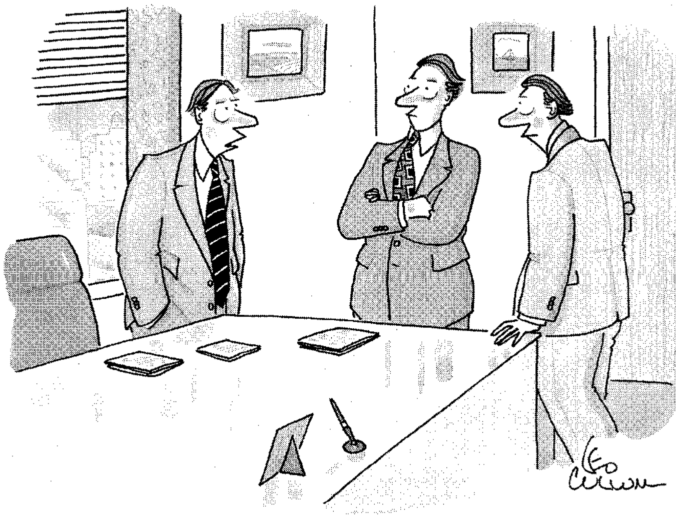

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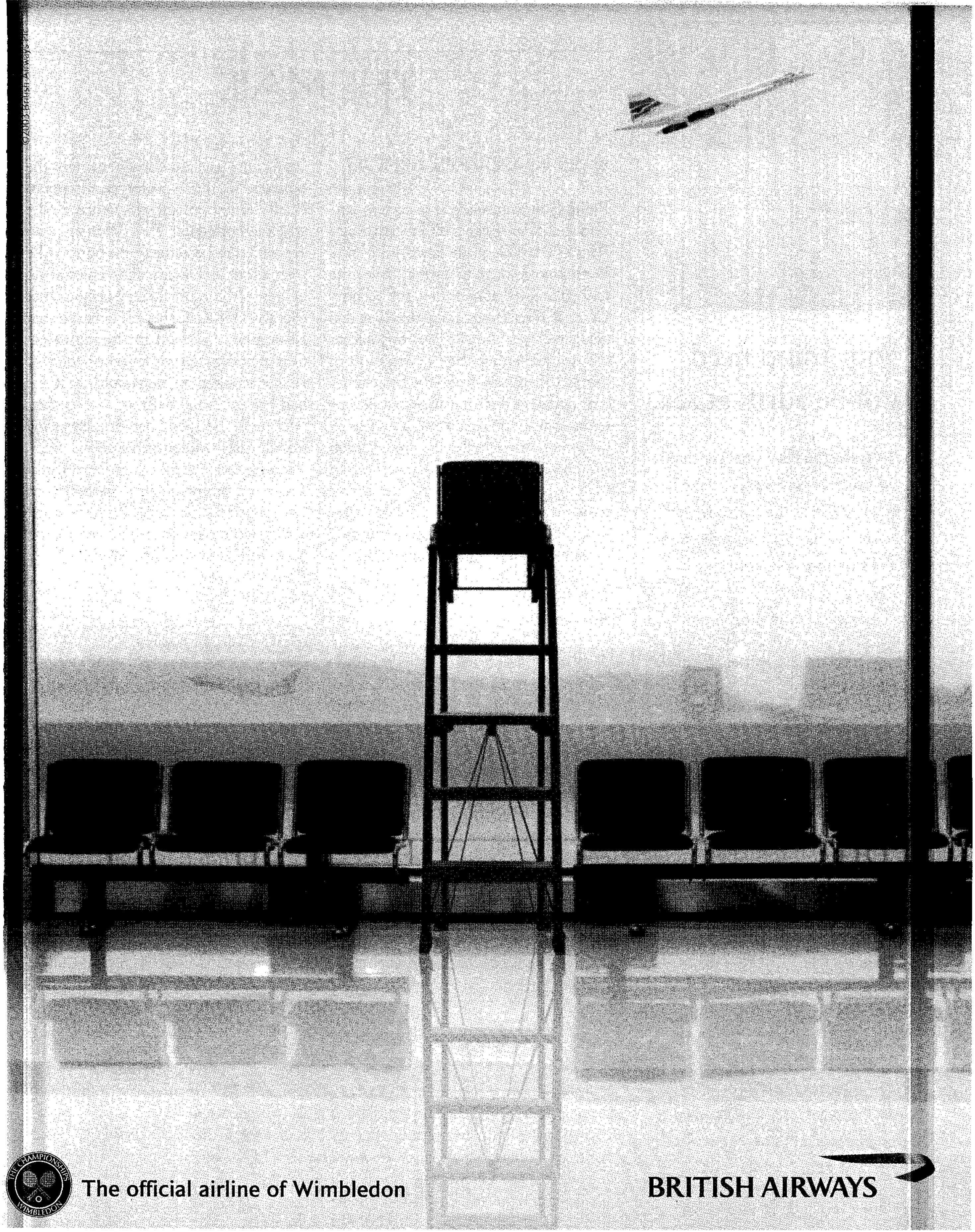
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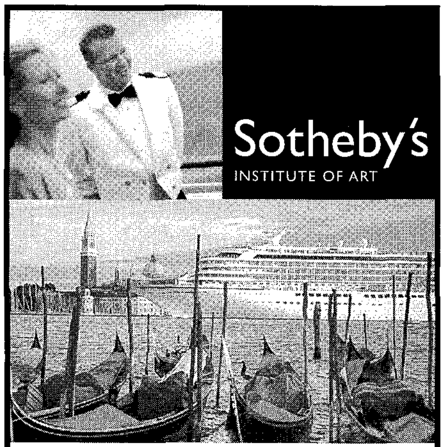

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THE MAIL

WHO ABANDONED AFRICA?

Philip Gourevitch is right to express concern about American indifference toward Africa (The Talk of the Town, June 2nd). But it is not enough to say that "it was the United States that prevented the Security Council from acting during the Rwandan genocide." Yes, the U.S. was opposed to robust intervention, but so was most of the Security Council and the Secretariat. The unilateral withdrawal of peacekeepers by contributing countries, as well as an insistence on a ceasefire as a precondition of intervention, paralyzed the United Nations as a whole. If the U.S. deserves to be singled out for its abdication of responsibility, it should be because more is expected of the U.S., and not because it was unique in its fecklessness.
E. S. Elizondo
Belmont, Mass.

Gourevitch berates the Bush Administration for refusing "to commit any troops" to intervene in the Congo's civil war, despite supporting such a move in principle. But surely he recognizes that our military is stretched very thin, both for our own needs and to support other international actions. (Remember the one-year commitment in the Balkans, now in its eighth year?) Liberals have to come to terms with a fundamental contradiction in their view of America's role in the world: they push for cuts in the military, but at the same time they want it to take on new missions.
Marvin Coverdell
Troy, Ill.

BRIDGMAN V. KELLER

Cynthia Ozick, in defending Helen Keller against cruel and carping accusations of plagiarism and "word-mindedness," contrasts Keller with her deaf and blind predecessor at the Perkins school, Laura Bridgman, who "stuck to her lacemaking, and with all her senses intact might have remained a needlewoman" ("What Helen Keller Saw," June 16th & 23rd). The world has always judged Bridgman and Keller as if they were contestants in a deaf-blind pageant. Bridgman was the outdated Victorian prototype, inferior in beauty, ambition, and eloquence; Keller was the congenial New Woman who succeeded in becoming—to borrow the poet Donald Davie's characterization of her—"the most literary person" that ever was. Yet Keller herself believed that Bridgman, educated in the eighteen-thirties and forties without the benefit of Braille, would have "outshone" her if she had had an Anne Sullivan as a teacher. Although she spent her time as many middle-class women of her period did—teaching and plying her needle—Bridgman never accepted her lacemaking role. She longed for marriage, intimacy, stimulating conversation, useful work, and more and better books for the blind.
Elisabeth Gitter
New York City

MINISTRY OF CRIMINAL WALKS

Trying to identify terrorists by their walk, a Defense Department effort that Ben McGrath reports on, is nothing new (The Talk of the Town, June 2nd). Maynard Shaw, a prosecution witness in the 1920 trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, testified that he could distinguish the nationality of one of the men he saw robbing a payroll truck from his gait. Shaw claimed that he could tell that the man was a foreigner by the way he ran and, specifically, that he was European, either "Italian or Russian." In cross-examination, Vanzetti's lawyer asked, "You would not say that he was a Jap or a Chinaman or an African?" "Nor an American," Shaw answered. Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted and executed. It was only in 1977 that the governor of Massachusetts issued a proclamation declaring the trial unfair.
George Manupelli
Senior Scholar, York University
Toronto, Ontario

•

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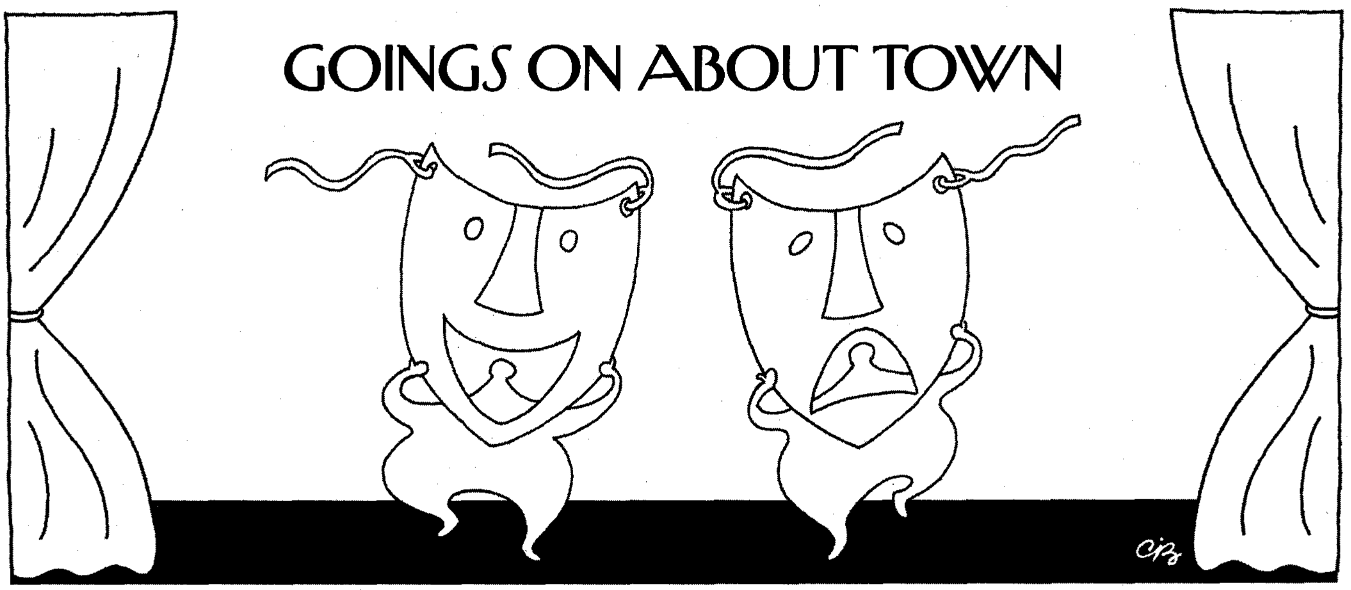

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

GETTING INTO HEAVEN
A gritty new play by Polly Draper (who also plays the lead) shows a rock star's struggle to keep her family and her love life from falling apart after a tragedy. With an original rock score by Draper's husband, the jazz musician Michael Wolff. Directed by Claire Lundberg. In previews. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

HENRY V
The Public Theatre's 2003 Shakespeare in the Park summer series begins with a history play, starring Liev Schreiber and directed by Mark Wing-Davey. In previews. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 212-539-8750.)

THE NOTEBOOKS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI
Mary Zimmerman ("Metamorphoses") brings her 1993 play about the imagination of Da Vinci back to Second Stage in a production that combines dance, theatre, music, and acrobatics. In previews. Opens June 29 at 3. (307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

OPENED RECENTLY

A BAD FRIEND
Kala Savage and Jan Maxwell star in a new play by Jules Feiffer about political passions in nineteen-fifties Brooklyn. Directed by Jerry Zaks. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW
"How can a woman have a husband when all the men still belong to their mothers?" asks Minnie (Angela Reed), the title character of D. H. Lawrence's 1911 play. The brooding domestic drama unfolds against the backdrop of a miners' strike in a town in Nottinghamshire and features Gareth Saxe as the husband and Mikel Sarah Lambert as his mother. Directed by Martin L. Platt, it's spoken in an odd northern dialect called Ilson, but the play's anthropological value is undermined by Lawrence's limited dramaturgical skills—the exposition is endless, and his idea of realistic dialogue is to have the characters repeat themselves two or three times per speech. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231. Closes July 13.)

EIGHT DAYS (BACKWARDS)
Jeremy Dobrish's latest play accomplishes something special: it rescues the term "soul mate" from the teen-movie set. He's writing about serious adults who really love each other, or really want to. In the first of eight vignettes, the fifty-something, blue-collar Frank (Bill Buell) boldly risks pleasuring his wife of decades (Randy Danson) by squeezing into leather bondage gear, hoping only to be a good slave. In another exchange, Jonathan (Josh Radnor) delivers an inspired postcollegiate rant that would be, if posted online, the best and most touching thing to ever hit JDate. Mark Brokaw deftly handles the direction of a talented ensemble. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303. Closes July 5.)

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FIRST LIGHT:
A FESTIVAL OF NEW SHORT PLAYS
Eleven short plays make their début in two programs at Chashama, including "Your Call Is Important," by Craig Lucas (about road rage), "Climate," by Joe Pintauro (about a trophy wife), and "Soooo Sad," by Ty Adams, in which two Park Avenue women on vacation in the Hamptons relive the previous night's party. (135 W. 42nd St. 212-868-4444. Closes June 29.)

A GLANCE AT NEW YORK
In 1848, the urban myth of Mose the Fireman—a beer-swilling, river-jumping god of the streets—was created in Benjamin Baker's original production of this play, which is now receiving its first New York revival since the Civil War era. In the Axis Company version, Jim Sterling stars as the mutton-chopped Mose, and Brian Barnhart and David Crabb play a pair of hardworking con artists. The cast perform their melodramatic roles with gusto, but they are so heavily caked in ghostly makeup (they look as though they've been assaulted by sacks of flour) that it's hard to pay attention to anything else. In whiteface, echoing one another's lines like a choral arrangement of Rain Men, they make nineteenth-century New York seem like a melting pot of cracked-out pod people. Directed by Randy Sharp. (1 Sheridan Sq. 212-807-9300. Closes July 19.)

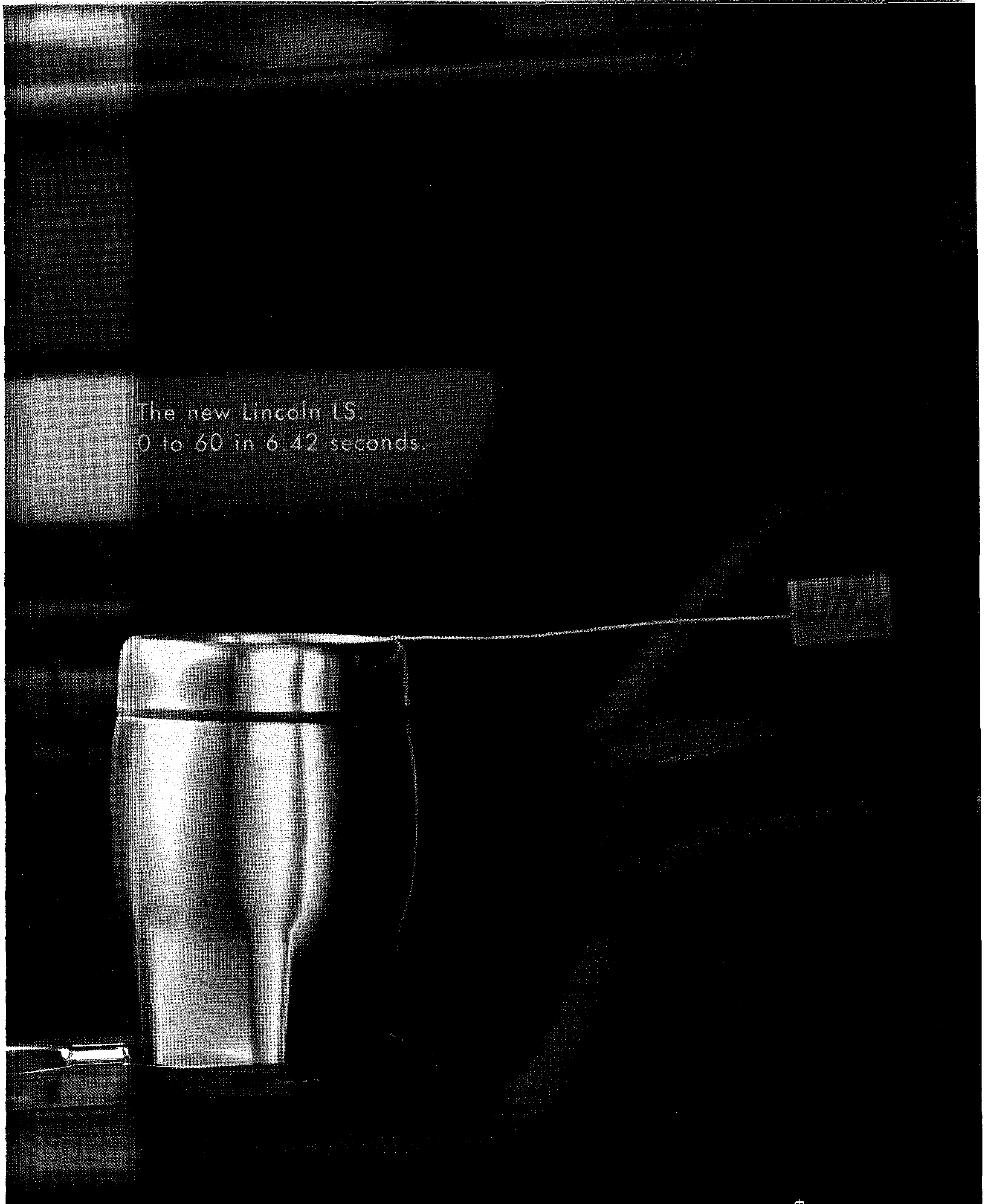
I AM MY OWN WIFE
The play is—as its title broadcasts—the story of a narcissist. Nothing, however, can prepare you for its hero, Lothar Berfelde, a transvestite and collector who, living for decades in East Berlin as Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, survived first the Nazis, then the Stasi. There is no makeup, no feminine exaggeration, no camp, no sense of defiance or despair in her presentation of self. At first glance, she could almost be a nun. As Jefferson Mays brilliantly embodies her, she is a meticulous, modest soul. What is sensational about her is her normality. The playwright, Doug Wright ("Quills"), conceives the evening as a sort of detective story to uncover the facts of Charlotte's life, and Mays plays all the characters with thrilling credibility. Moisés Kaufman's strong direction makes the transitions both clear and compelling. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/9/03.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Closes July 20.)

INTRIGUE WITH FAYE
In this moody relationship drama by the "Six Feet Under" writer and producer Kate Robin, a narcissistic, insecure couple, united chiefly by mutual mistrust and a dependence on bottled water, start videotaping each other to see if their feelings seem more real when they're canned. Pretty Benjamin Bratt has the vivacity of a Styrofoam cutout, and his voice sounds microwaved. It's hard for Julianna Margulies's character to drape her pettish resentments on him, but she tries, wanly. The play redefines "straight to video." Directed by Jim Simpson. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Closes July 19.)

LAST DANCE
You may not want to like a play about a famous writer who retires to a villa in the South of France and casts off her strapping younger lover, but the playwright, Marsha Norman, wins you over. On a staid, pretty set that evokes the Britcom "As Time Goes By," funny and bitter truths emerge with surprising sting, mostly from the mouth of Randall (David Rasche), a courtly but jaundiced Southerner who wants to wrest Charlotte, the writer, from her Adonis, Cab (the beautiful Lorenzo Pisoni), whom he nicknames "Cabernet" and "Cabana. As in boy." But his jealousy is unnecessary; Charlotte (Jo-Beth Williams) has already decided to hand Cab off to her goddaughter, Georgeanne (Heather Goldenhersh), because she's "tired" of love. Goldenhersh uses a juleppy Southern accent and has a dewy ingenuousness that recalls the young Shirley MacLaine. She's powerful in her artlessness, sexy because she's not trying to be. Directed by Lynne Meadow. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Closes July 6.)

"MACK THE KNIFE" . . .
THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF BOBBY DARIN
"Splish Splash," "Dream Lover," "If I Were a Carpenter," and the above ballad have been whipped into a musical tribute to Bobby Darin by Chaz Esposito, who plays the title role and directs, and James Haddon, the musical director. With a nine-piece band. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 212-239-6200.)

"MASTER HAROLD" . . . AND THE BOYS
The "boys" of Athol Fugard's play, set in the nineteen-fifties, are two adult black South Afri-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LINCOLN

cans, Willie (Michael Boatman) and Sam (Danny Glover), who work at the St. Georges Park Tea Room and spend much of their time bantering with a seventeen-year-old whippersnapper, Hal (Christopher Denham)—or Hally, as they call him—who is the son of the tearoom's owners. What begins as a gentle dance of teasing and reminiscence between three people who are clearly family turns into a tense standoff, as a series of phone calls introduce the problem of Hally's father—a crippled, abusive drunk. When Hally begins to bad-mouth his father, Sam tells him to watch his tone, and a war begins in which pain, fury, love, and hate ricochet between the two of them. Grieving and wanting to inflict grief in return, Hally uses race as a weapon to hurt Sam and hurts himself, too. Directed by Lonny Price. (6/9/03) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. Closes July 13.)

PITCHFORK DISNEY
Stiff Upper Lip, a new British theatre company, brings a dark comedy from the London Fringe to New York, in which a nightclub entertainer preys upon two chocolate-addicted twins. With an all-British cast of New York-based actors. Kevin Kittle directs. (Greenwich Street, 547 Greenwich St. 212-352-3101.)

SAVANNAH BAY
Dressed in floor-length, jewel-toned bias-cut gowns, Kathleen Chalfant and Marin Ireland resemble Lladró figurines as they deliver the impossible lines of Marguerite Duras's cryptic, stiff, but mercifully short play about (vaguely) a self-dramatizing ex-*vedette*, her dead daughter, and a young girl who is probably her granddaughter. Chalfant's regal poise, Ireland's youthful grace, Les Water's sculptural direction, and Barbara Bray's new translation cannot help Duras's mumbo-jumbo acquire coherence, or life. (Classic Stage, 136 E. 13th St. 212-677-4210, ext. 13. Closes June 29.)

7 BLOWJOBS
Thin Duke Productions presents a revival of Mac Wellman's satire, in which the zealous employees of a conservative Republican senator expose their prejudices as they react to a package of risqué photos that has arrived at the congressman's office. Directed by Philip Cruise. (Trilogy, 341 W. 44th St. 212-866-4444. Closes July 13.)

TERRITORY
The young Bottle Factory Theatre Company ("Peter and Vandy") presents a new play by Lawrence Levine—an unconventional love story that stars John Good and Amanda Gruss, as a couple who live in the East Village, and Grant Varjas, as an old roommate who pays an unexpected visit. (195 E. 3rd St. 212-868-4444. Through July 6.)

WHOSE FAMILY VALUES!
A family becomes embroiled in the moral dilemma of whether to turn in an abortion-clinic bomber to authorities, in a timely new drama by Richard Abrons, presented by New Federal Theatre. Directed by Philip Rose. (Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Closes June 29.)

OUT OF TOWN

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
The seventeenth season of the festival at Boscobel begins with the romantic comedy "All's Well That Ends Well," performed under a tent with views of the Hudson River Valley. Directed by Terrence O'Brien. With Michael Borrelli, Gabra Zackman, and Nance Williamson. (Garrison, N.Y. 845-265-9575.)

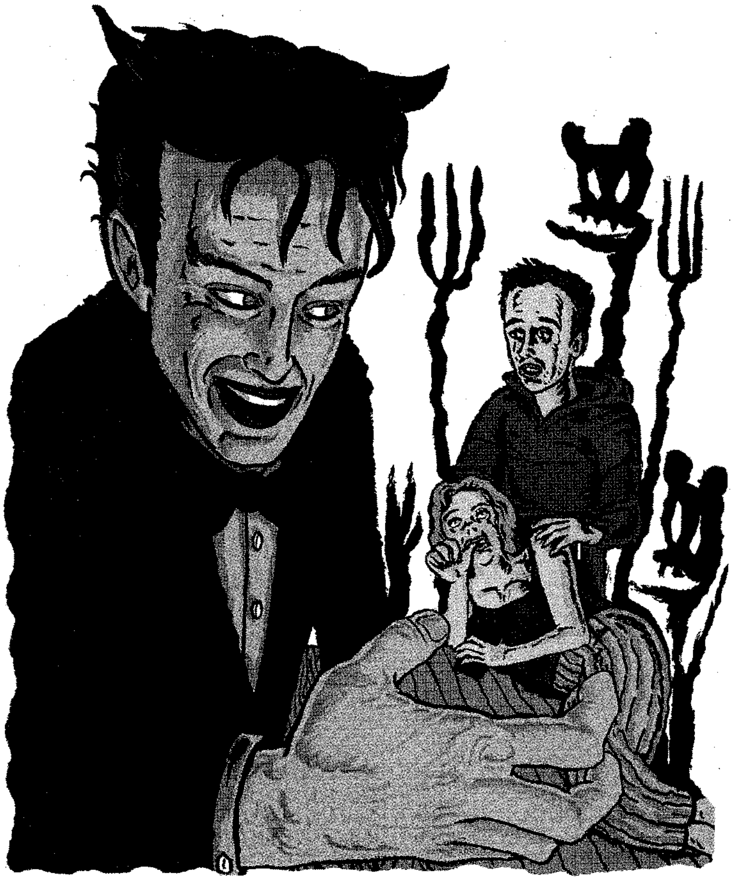
LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 212-254-4370.

LA BOHÈME
Broadway, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200. (Closes June 29.)



Stiff Upper Lip's "Pitchfork Disney," at the Greenwich Street Theatre.

DAVID SANDLIN

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-239-6200.

CHICAGO
Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 212-239-6200.

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM
Village, 158 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.

ENCHANTED APRIL
Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

GOLDA'S BALCONY
Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200.

GYPSY
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

HAIRSPRAY
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.

HANK WILLIAMS: LOST HIGHWAY
Little Shubert, 422 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

KIKI AND HERB: COUP DE THÉÂTRE
Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St., between Bedford and Hudson Sts. 212-239-6200.

THE LAST SUNDAY IN JUNE
Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT
Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

MAMMA MIA!
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.

MAN OF LA MANCHA
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

MOVIN' OUT
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.

NINE
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

RAIN DANCE
Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529. (Closes June 29.)

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 212-921-8000.

STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 212-477-2477.

TAKE ME OUT
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.

TEA AT FIVE
Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100.

URINETOWN
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.

WRITER'S BLOCK
Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200. (Closes June 29.)

ZANNA, DON'T!
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
The season closes with a week of performances of Balanchine's "A Midsummer Night's Dream": June 24 at 7:30, June 25-27 at 8, June 28 at 2 and 8, and June 29 at 3. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
The final week of A.B.T.'s spring season concludes with Kevin McKenzie's production of Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake." ♦ June 25 at 2: "Artemis," "The Leaves Are Fading" pas de deux, "Grand Pas Classique," and "The Dream." ♦ June 25 at 8: "Artemis," "Grand Pas Classique," "Don Quixote" pas de deux, and "The Dream." June 26-27 at 8 and June 28 at 2 and 8: "Swan Lake." (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

PILOBOLUS
This summer's engagement samples early and recent repertory in three programs, each with one première. Michael Tracy's "My Brother's Keeper" shows the group's typical free-association contortions, Alison Chase's "Star-Cross'd" uses the company style to riff on Shakespeare, and Jonathan Wolken's "Wedlock" paints concise portraits of couplehood in eight short duets. In more than thirty years of dance, Pilobolus's trademark acrobatics have acquired a patina of familiarity—not least because the troupe's success has spawned many imitators—but they still dazzle and amuse. Even a vintage work can seem startlingly fresh, as in "Untitled" (1975), in which an accumulation of quirky stunts tips over into strange poetry. (The Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. June 23-28 at 8 and June 28 at 2. Through July 19.)

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"WILD HUMAN POETRY"
Wearing costumes steeped in the colors of southern Spain—lemon, aqua, and ochre—Wil Swanson and the seven dancers of his company, DanceWorks, present a study of symmetrical forms and spatial patterns that they developed last year in Valencia. In the piece, called "Cubic Legroom," the dancers unloose their limbs in a generous, flowing motion, letting momentum rather than strenuous muscular effort propel their arching and tumbling. When they roll onto their backs, raise both legs straight up, and hold them midair for an extended moment, they mirror the pillars of the church around them. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. June 26-29 at 8:30.)

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL BALLET COMPETITION
Natalia Makarova leads an international panel of jurors, judging young dancers from twenty-three countries in their performances of three pas de deux: one by Bournonville, one by José Limón, and one by Petipa. ♦ June 25-26 at 8: "Kermesse in Bruges" pas de deux. ♦ June 27 at 8: "Mazurkas." ♦ June 28 at 8: "Shades" pas de deux, from "La Bayadère." (Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center. 212-721-6500.)

"AWAKENINGS"
The Florida choreographer Frankie Hart is not only a modern dancer, she's a certified yoga and *qigong* instructor. In two evenings at the Merce Cunningham Studio, Hart and her troupe demonstrate their cross-training in works that evoke the peaceful limberness of Tai Chi. In "I Ching," the dancers, wearing martial-arts pants, illustrate four hexagrams from the Chinese book of precepts: "Thunder Repeated," "The Taming Power of the Small," "The Gentle, the Penetrating," and "Toward Completion." Other pieces include "Libertango" and "Sanctuary." (55 Bethune St. 212-924-0077. June 27 at 9 and June 28 at 8:30.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW
The flamenco star María Pagés brings her company to Jacob's Pillow for the first time. Known for her roles in Carlos Saura films and for her flamenco cameos in "Riverdance," Pagés has a forceful stage presence and supple, serpentine arms. She's also responsible for some of the better experiments in contemporary flamenco. In the first half of "Flamenco Republic," a combination of two evening-length works, a man falls in love so intensely with the duchess in a painting by Goya that the image comes to life, and they dance a duet to the sounds of Piazzolla, Schubert, Maria Callas, and Gene Kelly. In the second part, Pagés delivers more traditional exposition of flamenco's sensual drama, engaging in playful conversation with her musicians, including the extraordinary *cajón* player Manuel Soler. (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. June 25-28 at 8 and June 28-29 at 2.)

TANGLEWOOD
Mark Morris Dance Group collaborates with the musicians of the summer festival in the Berkshires for the first time, performing three dances with music: "Frisson," set to Stravinsky's "Symphonies of Wind Instruments," "Jesu, meine Freude," set to the Bach motet by that name, and "Falling Down Stairs"—accompanied live by Yo-Yo Ma, playing Bach's Suite No. 3 in C for Solo Cello. (Ozawa Hall, Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200. June 29-30 at 8:30.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

HUDSON RIVER FESTIVAL
Peter Cincotti, who was a seven-year-old jazz-piano prodigy when he was discovered by Harry Connick, Jr., is now a photogenic media darling (and a junior at Columbia). As a vocalist he has room to grow, but on the keyboards he already has chops to spare. (Rockefeller Park, Battery Park City. For more information, call 212-528-2733 or visit www.hudsonriverfestival.com. June 25 at 7.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Branch Library

RICHARD MCGUIRE

The great nineteenth-century American preacher and abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher called them "tabernacles of the air." They were depicted as soaring colossi on luminous canvases by the likes of Thomas Cole, and their virtues—stately posture, rapid growth, a lofty crown of verdure, and a habit of forming cathedral-like groves—were celebrated by Hawthorne and Thoreau and by such esteemed visitors as Dickens and Trollope. Taken together, they were perhaps New England's, and America's, most famous citizens: the leafy representatives of *Ulmus americana*, the American elm, a tree that for a few hundred years defined the American landscape and that an awestruck French naturalist once described as "the most magnificent vegetable of the temperate zone." In Thomas J. Campanella's edifying **REPUBLIC OF SHADE** (Yale), the mighty elm—whose dominance as America's favorite tree was toppled by the devastating epidemic of Dutch-elm disease that began in 1931—rises again, as Campanella explores the history of the plant that launched an entire nation of Elm Streets.

Campanella points out that New York City was once famous for its lush, tree-lined avenues. In the photographer Sean Kernan's arresting **AMONG TREES** (Artisan), New York's trees appear as boulevardiers decked out in Christmas lights. Kernan traversed the planet in search of tangled roots and dappled canopies, and his photographs frame trees as peaceful neighbors of the earth's human residents: palms arch into the Los Angeles twilight, and an unidentified specimen shares plaza space with an elderly Segovian gent. Kernan also plays with scale: a row of Tuscan poplars, sizable by human standards, is dwarfed by an electrical tower.

—*Mark Rozzo*

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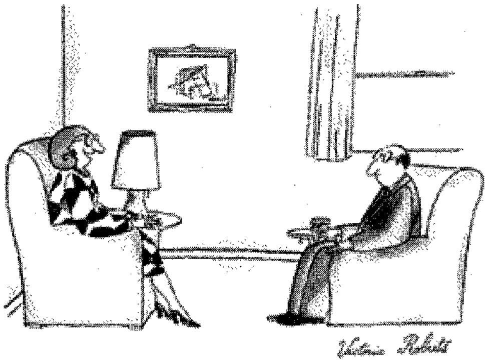

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"Young Man Posing with His Gamecock, Pinar del Río Province, 2002," by Ernesto Bazan, at I.C.P. (See Photography.)

MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING

The outdoor dancing at Lincoln Center gets under way on June 25 with the jumping sounds of **Buster Poindexter,** the brassy alter ego of the dexterous musician David Johansen. June 26: A night of tango with the Argentinean bandoneón player **Hector del Curto** and the vocalist **Roxana Fontán.** June 27: Salsa with the trombonist **Jimmy Bosch.** June 28 from 4 to 5:30: The floor belongs to the next generation of dancers as Pierre Dulaine, of the American Ballroom Theatre, gives kids instructions on how to lead, how to follow, and what foot to start with. Later that night, at 7:30, the sixteen-piece **Harlem Renaissance Orchestra** takes the crowd back to the Big Band era. (For more information, call 212-875-5766. Unless otherwise noted, all shows are at 7:30, with dance lessons starting an hour earlier.)

JVC JAZZ FESTIVAL

If last year's JVC Jazz Festival leaned too heavily on the pop side of things, this year's edition, which continues through June 28, makes amends nicely. Sure, Joe Cocker and India.Arie slip in (on June 25 and June 27, respectively, at Avery Fisher Hall), but any musical celebration that covers the range from Bix Beiderbecke to Ornette Coleman, with pit stops along the way for Joe Wilder, Terence Blanchard, Ray Barretto, Ben Allison, and Chris Connor, must be doing something right. With one or more acts of substance scheduled for each night, picking which shows to attend is a luxurious challenge. Highlights include Ornette Coleman's trio and Charlie Haden's American Dream project (June 25; Carnegie Hall), Chick Corea (June 26; Avery Fisher Hall), Wayne Shorter (June 28; Carnegie Hall), and a week of adventurous booking at the Village Vanguard. All shows are at 8. See also Birdland, under Jazz and Standards. For more information, call 212-501-1390 or visit www.festivalproductions.net.

NEIL YOUNG

The ever-outspoken classic-rock elder statesman has a new project, a "musical novel" called "Greendale" (scheduled to be released in August), which more or less examines the effects of the media on a California family caught up in crises (a son murders a police officer; a daughter joins the environmental movement). Young, backed by his longtime band Crazy Horse, is presenting the new material in its entirety, with the help of stage sets, actors, and videos. Those interested in Young's hit-laden back catalogue will have to wait for the encores. The opener is the moody Louisiana singer **Lucinda Williams.** (Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. June 26 at 7:30. ♦ Jones Beach Theatre. 212-307-7171. June 29 at 7.)

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!

June 27 at 7:30: The roots reggae of the **Abyssinians.** June 28 at 7:30: The eclectic and well-connected producer Hal Willner, who has arranged tributes to everyone from Charles Mingus to Edgar Allan Poe, turns his attention to Leonard Cohen, the Canadian recluse whose majestic songbook is tailor made for interpretation. For the **"Came So Far for Beauty"** concert—featuring the Handsome Family, Linda Thompson, Teddy Thompson, Martha Wainwright, Rufus Wainwright, and Kate and Anna McGarrigle, among others—Willner promises to touch on the whole of Cohen's career, from the poignancy of such timeless singles as "Suzanne" (an early hit for Judy Collins) through the prescient paranoia of the album "The Future" to Cohen's latest work. "We'll even include a few songs from the Phil Spector record," Willner says, referring to "Death of a Ladies' Man," Cohen's overproduced opus from 1977. "Nobody ever does that." (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. 718-855-7882, ext. 45.)

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE

June 26-27 at 6:30: The alternative-country band **Wilco** and the pioneering New York art-rock outfit **Sonic Youth** team up for a benefit show. June 28 at 3: An afternoon of Icelandic rock with **Singapore Sling.** (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 212-360-2777.)

EARTH, WIND & FIRE

In their seventies heyday they were as well known for their flamboyance and their spirituality as they were for their complex musical arrangements and the soaring vocals of Maurice White and Philip Bailey. Since then the band may have made some dubious choices (getting into bed with MC Hammer back in 1990 comes to mind), but they never lost their touch—they're back on the charts with a new release, "The Promise." With a professionalism and longevity that make them the Rolling Stones of soul, the polished collective will easily turn the Beacon Theatre into a boogie wonderland. (Broadway at 74th St. 212-307-7171. June 28 at 8.)

ROY CARRIER & THE NIGHT ROCKERS

Lawtell, a little town in the southwestern corner of Louisiana, midway between Opelousas and Eunice, is the home of Roy Carrier's zydeco night club, the Offshore Lounge. Roy and his band are seasoned entertainers who will have no trouble spreading the dancing spirit up north. (La Belle Époque, 827 Broadway, at 13th St. For more information, call 212-685-7597. June 29 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BARBÈS

376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—June 28: **Life in a Blender,** longtime local favorites on the quirk-rock circuit.

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—June 27: **Wire.** One of the first seventies-era British punk bands to spurn the uniformity of their genre, this artsily angular quartet abandoned leather-clad, three-chorded, spittle-drenched buffoonery for a more experimental approach, which they have yet to surrender. June 28-29: The front-porch ballads and lilting, whimsical waltzes of **Clem Snide.** With the trippy violinist **Lisa Germano.**

FEZ

380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—June 25: **The Real Tuesday Weld,** a.k.a. Stephen Coates, an English pop crooner with a devilish air, makes his New York City début following a postponed appearance earlier this month. June 27: **Piñataland** gives an American-history lesson with its guitar-tuba-

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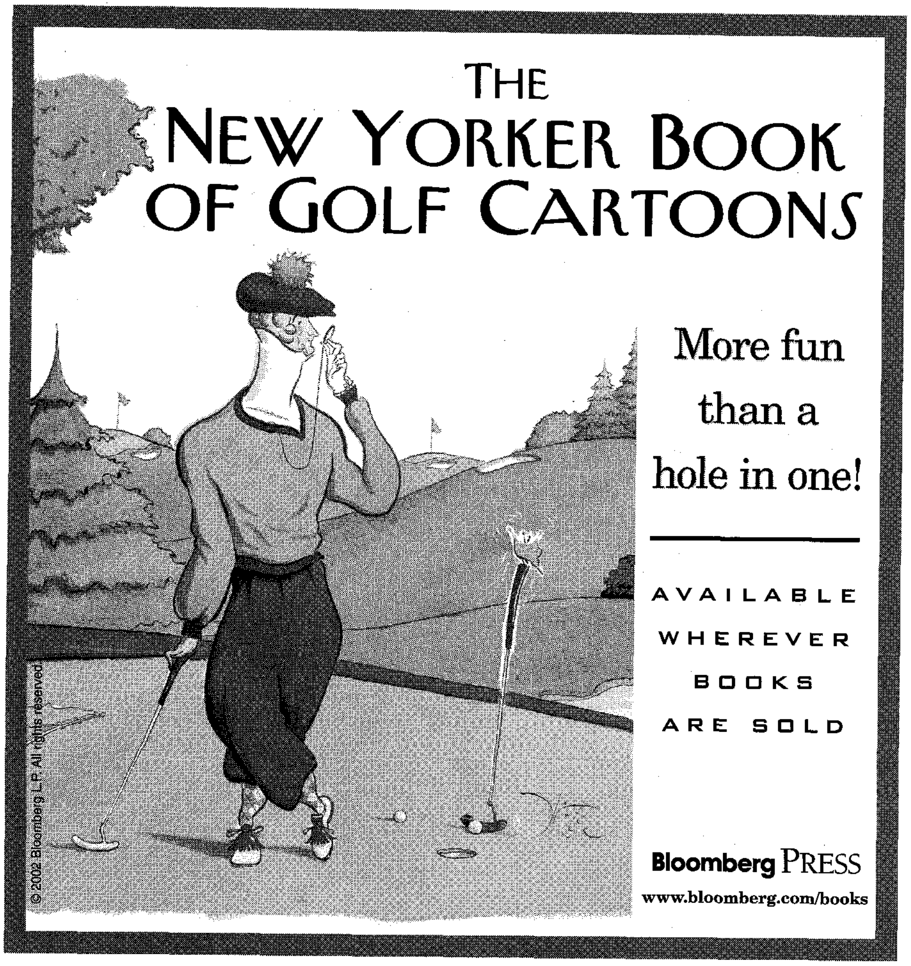
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and-violin-fuelled orchestral pop. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—June 27-28: Top-shelf Americana from Minneapolis's **Jayhawks,** whose new album, "Rainy Day Music," returns the group to its earthy, rootsy origins. With the **Thorns,** a minor supergroup led by the indie-rock heroes Pete Droge, Shawn Mullins, and Matthew Sweet that reaches back to the days of vintage Crosby, Stills & Nash.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—June 28: **Cinerama.** Since putting the Wedding Present, his prototypical indie band, on hiatus in 1997, the British songsmith David Gedge has replaced his punky guitar fixation with this romantic side project. It features his girlfriend, Sally Murrell, and it owes more to the whimsy of "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" than to the frantic angst of the Buzzcocks. June 29: The hip-hop pioneers the **Jungle Brothers.** With **Black Sheep,** the rapping duo who have yet to match the heights of their hilarious 1991 début album, "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing." June 30: The inspired bombast of San Francisco's **Sleepytime Gorilla Museum.** With the outer-borough, Eastern Eurocentric ensemble **Barbez** and the Weimaresque cabaret of Boston's **Dresden Dolls.**

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—June 26: **Maplewood** delivers an evening of backcountry ballads along the lines of the Flying Burrito Brothers. June 28: The crisp, rootsy rock and roll of the **Blue Dogs.**

NORTHSIX
66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—June 26: The two women in **Bitch and Animal** are a pair of self-described "queeps" (that's short for queer people) who serve up a folksy pro-sex message with sides of theatrical multi-instrumentalism (ukulele, violin, *djembe*). June 27: The **Candy Snatchers** specialize in a fist-meets-front-teeth brand of reckless punk rock, performing such songs as "Ass, Grass, or Crack" and "Why I Drink" with suitably rude aplomb.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745)—June 28: The veteran New York City rocker **Garland Jeffreys** goes wild in the streets. July 1: Back in the sixties, **Howard Tate** looked poised for soul stardom; his best-known song, "Get It While You Can," inspired a faithful cover by Janis Joplin. But Tate dropped out of sight due to assorted personal problems, and many soul fans assumed he was dead. Then, in 2001, Tate was found in the Philadelphia area, and he reunited with Jerry Ragovoy, who wrote and produced Tate's sixties sides. The result is "Rediscovered," a new album that finds the singer in spectacular voice and understandably high spirits.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—June 27: The JVC Jazz Festival continues with a "Salute to the Royal Roost." In classic-era bebop, no small group approached Charlie Parker's quintet, while mid-sized ensembles came no better than Tadd Dameron's sextet. Both bands are remembered by first-rate interpreters; the saxophonist **Jesse Davis** pays tribute to Parker, while **Jimmy Heath** and **Don Sickler** give the nod to Dameron. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through June 29: The **Dr. Billy Taylor** trio, with **Jon Faddis.** The venerable pianist Taylor is as elegant a stylist as they come; the trumpeter Faddis, on the other hand, has never been averse to giving decorum the heave-ho and letting loose a run that aims directly for the stratosphere, reaching it ten times out of ten. Together they'll cover much of bop's expansive emotional terrain.

CAJUN
129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (212-691-6174)—Mondays and Thursdays: **Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks.** Manning the most unwieldy of instru-

POP NOTES

HIGH CONCEPT

The venerable heavy-metal band Metallica spent the last few years distracted. First, there was the protracted legal battle against the online file-sharing service Napster, which was quickly followed by the departure of the bassist Jason Newsted and the rehabilitation from substance abuse of the lead singer, rhythm guitarist, and principal lyricist James Hetfield. As a result, **St. Anger** (Elektra), the band's eleventh album, arrives to both high and low expectations. But from the first seconds of "Frantic," it's clear that Metallica has rededicated itself to dense, complex heavy metal, as much weaponry as strategy. The lyrics have shifted slightly as well: in the past, Metallica has tackled everything from corporate corruption to religious hypocrisy. These songs are mostly straightforward confessionals, and, whether or not that's a result of Hetfield's rehab, it makes for a direct, consistently cathartic record. Songs like "My World," "Shoot Me Again," and "Purify" barrel forward; the album closer, "All Within My Hands," is an eight-minute-plus assault that ends with Hetfield yowling, "Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill."

Ever since Fountains of Wayne's self-titled début, in 1996, the New York-based power-pop band has presented something of a problem. On the one hand, the group, led by Chris Collingwood and Adam Schlesinger, writes effortlessly melodic, immensely clever songs that probe the superficial nature of the modern world. On the other hand, the group's material sometimes falls victim to that same superficiality: too many Fountains of Wayne songs stick in your head without quite sinking in. **Welcome Interstate Managers** (S-Curve) deepens the band's appeal by narrowing its focus: nearly all the songs cast an ironic, penetrating eye on the anonymous suburbs of New Jersey. "Bright Future in Sales" sketches the dead-end career of a young alcoholic, and "Stacy's Mom" may be the second-catchiest song ever written about a girlfriend's parent. ("Mrs. Robinson," the catchiest, is an important point of comparison; many songs here rely upon sweet harmonies and bouncy arrangements that recall late Simon and Garfunkel.) The record suggests that all the world's problems (and, presumably, solutions) can be found in the narrow band between Elizabeth and Hackensack; "Hackensack," in fact, is the name of one of the album's best songs, a wistful love letter from a Jersey loser to a former high-school crush who has gone on to Hollywood stardom. The chorus, which plaintively promises, "I will wait for you," walks to the edge of sentiment; for Fountains of Wayne, that's quite a journey.

—Ben Greenman

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ments (bass, tuba, bass saxophone) as well as a bulbous vintage Kellogg microphone, Giordano leads a tuxedo-clad twelve-piece band whose ease with early jazz and swing breathes life into an overlooked era. Sundays: Michael Arenella's **Cantonement,** featuring the vocals of Bliss Blood. The rest of the week, combos fluent in Dixieland jazz and other improvisational sounds of New Orleans take the stage. Dining.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Through June 29: The **Carla Bley Big Band.** Be forewarned: Bley will make you laugh. That doesn't make her music any less flinty or her arrangements any less imaginative or her big band any less polished, but a good chuckle has always been a key ingredient in Bley's idiosyncratic world. Her latest opus, "Looking for America," makes pointed political barbs through its sharp writing and orchestrations and puts a smile on your face all at the same time. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ GALLERY

290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—June 27: Although harmed by its excessive length, **Doug Wamble's** new album "Country Libations" is, so far, the début recording of the year. Thoroughly integrating rural blues, gospel, swing, and free jazz into an organic musical conception that owes little to any model, this acoustic guitarist, singer, and composer is a one-man compendium of avant Americana. If he only presents one-tenth of his potential live, it will be worth seeing.

JAZZ STANDARD

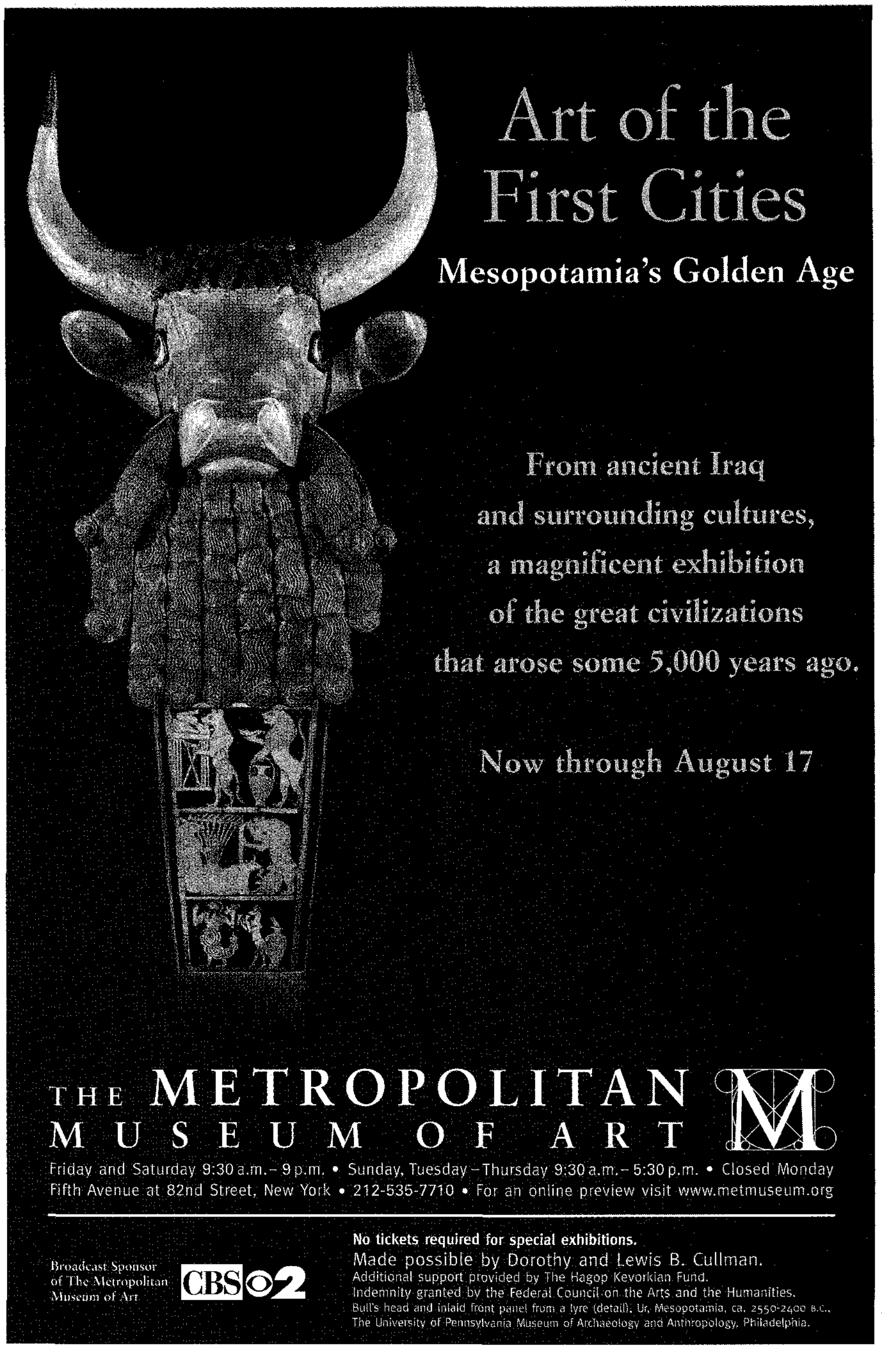
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Through June 29: Although his soon-to-be-released album "On This Day . . . at the Vanguard" features his bop-based nonet, for this engagement the saxophonist **Joe Lovano** revives his Street Band, a wonderfully off-the-wall ensemble complete with a vocalist and an accordion player, to pay homage to Enrico Caruso, as they did so well on the 2002 "Viva Caruso" album. Lovano, a great balladeer in his own right, gets to wear his heart on his sleeve throughout, and he wears it well. Dining.

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—June 25: A one-hit wonder she may be, but **Maria ("Midnight at the Oasis") Muldaur** was a flavorful singer before that 1973 hit, and she's continued to refine her vocal talents ever since. Here, paying tribute to Peggy Lee, as she also does on her fine new release, "A Woman Alone with the Blues," Muldaur is sure to display a sensuous sound, pleasingly cool yet loaded with heart. June 29: The ECM artist **Tord Gustavsen,** a Norwegian pianist whose compositions and lyrical improvisations share a strikingly melodic flair, makes his U.S. début, with a trio in tow, to support his new disk, "Changing Places."

SWEET RHYTHM

88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—June 26-28: The **Jane Ira Bloom** quartet. A formidable improviser with discerning instincts that set her apart from the Coltrane-obsessed soprano-sax players clogging the airwaves, Bloom has been even more adventurous recently, testing herself against edgier players (here with the drummer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Bull's head and inlaid front panel from a lyre (detail). Ur, Mesopotamia, ca. 2550-2400 B.C., The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia.

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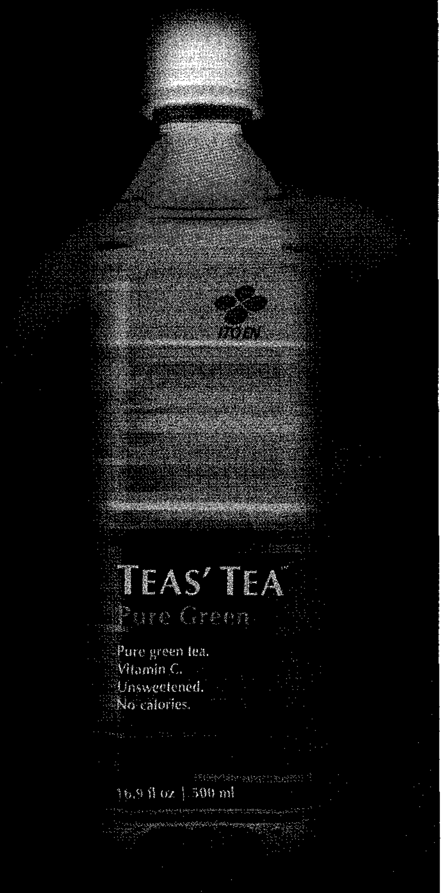


Bobby Previte, the bassist **Mark Dresser,** and the pianist **Marc Copland**) and succeeding admirably.

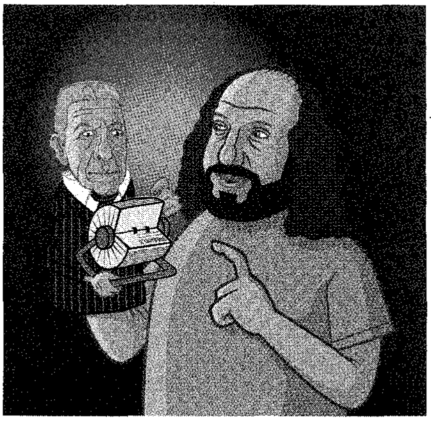
VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through June 29: Acts that turn left of the mainstream—each powered by drummer **Paul Motian**—muscle in each night, courtesy of the JVC Jazz Festival. The highlights include: **Tethered Moon,** with the pianist Masabumi Kikuchi and the bassist Gary Peacock (June 24); the pianist **Marilyn Crispell,** with the bassist **Mark Helias** (June 25); the saxophonist **Bill McHenry,** with **Ethan Iverson** and **Reid Anderson** (June 26); Motian's own **Electric Bebop Band** (June 27); and **Trio 2000 Plus One,** with the saxophonist Tony Malaby, the bassist Drew Gress, and the pianist Masabumi Kikuchi (June 28); and Bill McHenry, with the bassist Charlie Haden and Motian on the final night (June 29). The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—Factories are "our substitutes for religious expression," Charles Sheeler wrote in the twenties, and his photographs found the same Precisionist geometry in the flying buttresses of Chartres Cathedral and the blast furnaces of Ford Motor Company's River Rouge plant. Other standouts in this elegant survey of photographs—he took them to pay the bills, but they outshine his paintings—are studies of his Pennsylvania farmhouse and the silent film "Manhatta," a collaboration with Paul Strand seeking a visual corollary to Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," often called the first avant-garde film in America. Through Aug. 17. ♦ If the contents of the Iraqi National Museum had gone touring, instead of missing, the resulting show might have looked something like **"Art of the First Cities,"** a gravely opulent survey of Mesopotamian artifacts from the span of the third millennium B.C. As a history lesson, the show is understandably unwieldy, but it's full of strange fascinations in gold, ivory, lapis, and diorite: naked priest kings, lioness demons, cuneiform accounting ledgers, and a board game. The exhibition attests to the aesthetic refinement of Ur bureaucrats and leaves one wondering whether their successors in Washington and Baghdad could use a lesson or two in diplomatic finesse from Joan Aruz and Mahrukh Tarapor, who persuaded fifty museums in sixteen countries to loan works for the show. Through Aug. 17. ♦ After witnessing the atrocities of the First World War as a medic, the German painter Max Beckmann took up Expressionism to "reproach God for his errors." The museum recently acquired the famous "Hell" portfolio, eleven black-and-white lithographs that chronicle Beckmann's visit to Berlin in 1919 during the March Rebellion, when twelve hundred people were killed in two days. The original owner of the portfolio, the industrialist Hugo Stinnes, appears in a stinging caricature as a puppeteer dangling a marionette emperor, surrounded by human skulls and sacks of cash. This series' masterly balance between chaotic and carnivalesque is an amuse-bouche for the artist's retrospective opening at MOMA QNS at the end of June. Through Aug. 31. ♦ A playful roof-garden sculpture—a painted aluminum cottage with a red roof, white and yellow walls, and a blue chimney—by Roy Lichtenstein, the late Pop artist, sits on its own little lawn with a sign warning viewers to keep off the grass. Through Nov. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—Back in 1964, when Andy Warhol began shooting his **"Screen Tests,"** a three-minute "live" portrait might have seemed like an amusing but slight conceit. Since then, the burgeoning influence of the format (cf. Thomas Struth's huge projected portraits recently exhibited at the Metropolitan), along with the explosion of reality media, has made those first performances look eerily prescient. They're also captivating, partly because Warhol chose so many charismatic and beautiful subjects, among them Dennis Hopper, Gerard Malanga, Edie Sedgwick, Salvador Dali, and "Baby" Jane Holzer, who does some of the sexiest toothbrushing imaginable. Through Sept. 1. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Kazimir Malevich: Suprematism"** is a concise, bewitching show of paintings, drawings, and sculptures—many of them making their first trip outside Russia—that vivify the artist's revolutionary art and ideas. His definitive "Black Square," from 1915, is in terrible physical shape; it suffered in Soviet archives during Malevich's long official suppression. A tragic air extends even to mint-condition Suprematist works, which, with deep roots in Western aesthetics and Russian mysticism, conjured a Utopia of matter-of-fact materiality and cerebral rapture. Malevich confidently claimed that he worked in five "measures," the fifth being "economy." In the spell of his grandiose and doomed optimism, one can well believe that or pretty much anything. This show is important to any general assessment of modern art. Through Sept. 7. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)



Hal Willner brings the music of Leonard Cohen to Prospect Park (see Concerts—Celebrate Brooklyn!).

MICHAEL WELDON

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—In this retrospective devoted to the works of Elie Nadelman, more than two hundred sculptures, arranged chronologically, trace the evolution of Nadelman's concerns: from his early busts, which speak to ancient ideals of beauty, to his jazz-era middle works, folksy wooden genre figures of dancers and circus performers with sinuous bodies and gessoed features, to his final postwar efforts, rows of plaster figurines that look like toy-size gods and monsters. Through July 20. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM
45 W. 53rd St. (212-265-1040)—Baseball produces relics as readily as statistics, and the refreshing art in the American Folk Art Museum's **"The Perfect Game: America Looks at Baseball"** includes penny-arcade sluggers, player portraits embroidered by a game-deprived convict from sock and shoelace threads, several balls decorated with India ink by a multitalented umpire, frieze work from the original Yankee Stadium, a mysterious Mets logo fashioned by a Cuna Indian seamstress in Panama, an enamel-on-tin image of Jackie Robinson stealing home, and photographs of the shining but evanescent Bosox patterns mowed onto the Fenway Park outfield grass by groundskeeper David R. Mellor, a Cézanne of this new genre. Cooperstown, take note. Through Feb. 1. ♦ For the last ten years of the nineteenth century, Fritz Vogt, a German immigrant who died on New Year's Day in 1900, roamed New York's Mohawk Valley drawing architectural portraits on commission—houses, farms, a cheese factory. Vogt got off to a timid start doing straightforward early portraits of churches in graphite—there are a few in-

cluded in the show's twenty-six selections—but soon began to hit his stride, incorporating colored pencil and an idiosyncratic flattened perspective that reveals three sides of a building at once. The artist reportedly shunned offers of lodging, preferring to bunk on bales of hay, and his tidy world of clapboard, shutter, and fence is eerily exterior. Through Sept. 21. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 7:30.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"The Innocents,"** by the young artist Taryn Simon, consists of portraits of men exonerated (often through DNA tests) after serving time for violent crimes they did not commit. Her large color photographs, which began as assignments for the *Times Magazine*, are vivid tableaux staged at the crime scene, the locale of their alibi, or the sites of their arrest. The images spotlight Simon's showmanship as much as they illuminate the various stories or indict the justice system. An accompanying video, however, presenting simple documentary interviews, is eloquent, searing, and riveting. Through Aug. 31. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

MARSDEN HARTLEY
Viewers who didn't make it to Hartford for the recent retrospective of this great American modernist can console themselves with a first-rate exhibition of Hartley's still-lifes. Nearly sixty works, some on loan from major museums, trace his evolution, from tabletop fruit bowls he did in the teens of the last century under the influence of Matisse and Cézanne to nearly grisaille studies of ladies' gloves from the late thirties (the gloves belonged to the wife of the sculptor Gaston Lachaise). Several paintings reveal an interest in folk art, including the vibrant "Roses from Hispania," from 1935-36. The clear hues and impasto brushwork suggest a mosaic of broken glass. A contemporary reviewer summed it up as "one of those drive-away-the-blues pictures," a sentiment that applies to the show at large. Through June 27. (Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. 212-744-2300.)

SALLY MICHEL AND MILTON AVERY
This charming show presents portraits of Avery (1885-1965) by his wife, Sally Michel (she died in January, at the age of 100), with his depictions of her, and the pairing has the breezy intimacy of an impromptu duet. For forty years, they paint each other painting (a dashing watercolor of Sally in an orange chair overlooking bathers by the sea reconfirms Avery's considerable gifts as a colorist) and sketch each other lounging (Milton naps and smokes and naps some more). Avery slips in references to his own work (a canvas with the initials "M.A." hangs in the studio of "Female Artist"). Vitrines lined with photographs of the couple heighten the family-album feel. Through June 27. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 212-794-0550.)

Short List

BERNARDO SICILIANO
Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-355-4545. Through June 30.

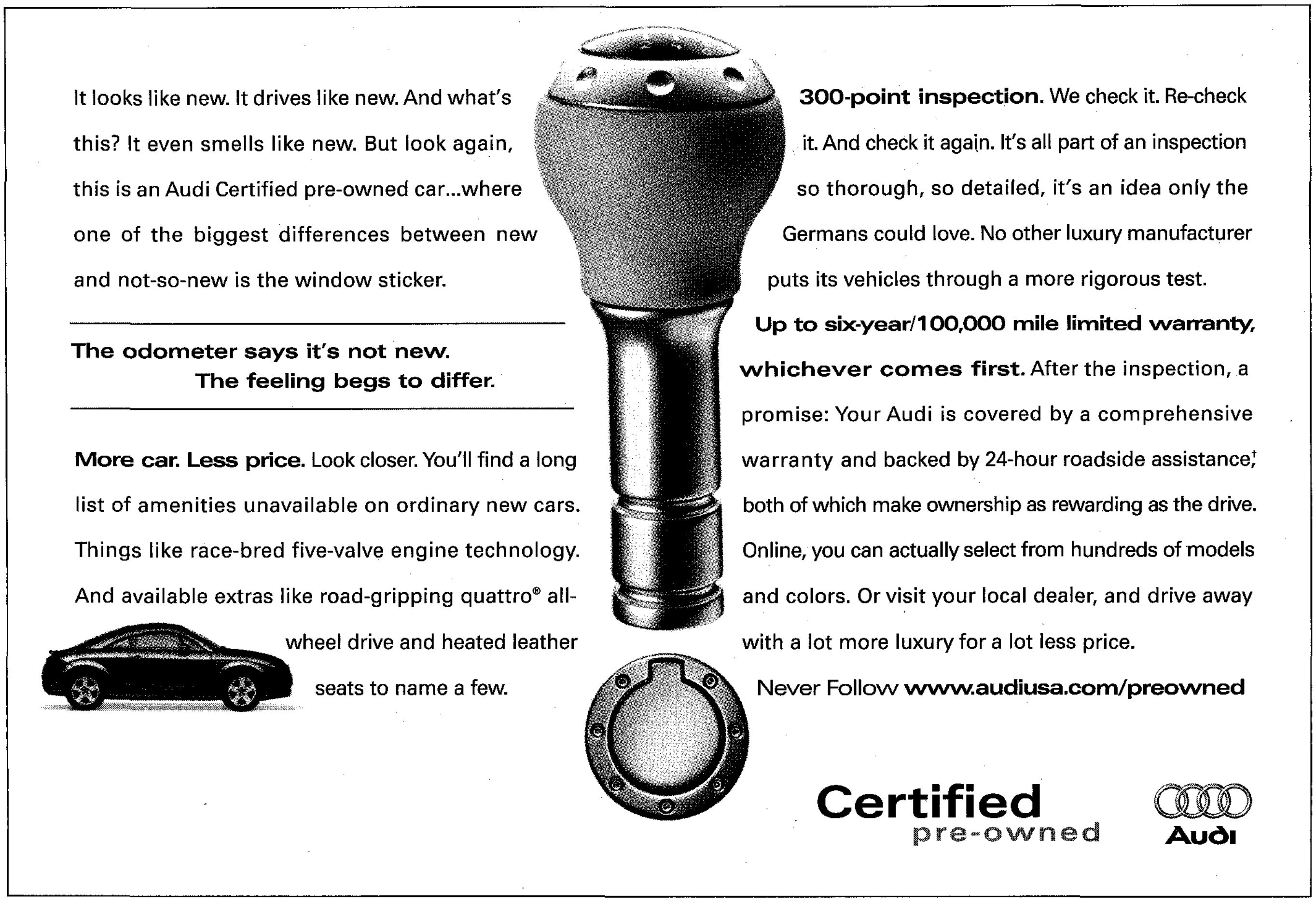
GALLERIES–CHELSEA

SUZANNE BOCANEGRA
Bocanegra creates elaborate works of drawing-cum-installation. One is called "All the Drawings from the Bloomingdale Brothers' Price List, Spring and Summer 1886," another "All the Petals from Jan Breughel the Elder's 'Bouquet,' 1607." They're composed of hundreds of small, cutout gouaches and watercolors depicting items from the nineteenth-century mail-order catalogue and the seventeenth-century still-life, respectively, all pinned, piled, and propped together into sprawling yet delicate, almost fastidious wholes. The pieces, which spill off the wall onto the floor, are really paper sculpture, as messy and methodical as thought. Through July 5. (Schoormans, 508 W. 26th St. 212-243-3159.)

ISAAC JULIEN
The filmmaker's triple-screen installation "Paradise Omeros," inspired by Derek Walcott's epic poem set in Saint Lucia, mixes familiar plot points—a callow youth from the colonies, a sophisticated group of city bohemians, a seductive older man, a lush but politically tragic island paradise—into an oneiric and kaleidoscopic narrative. The action flows across the three screens but is splintered by them and split again as certain scenes are repeated in a second film installation in a different room, and in a series of large photographs. Through Aug. 1. (Bohen Foundation, 415 W. 13th St. 212-414-4575.)

JEFF PERRONE / RENE RICARD
Perrone is a veteran theorist and practitioner of decorative art, the latter largely in ceramics. Here he presents big collages of fabrics, buttons, and colored sand, arrayed in irregular vertical stripes on supports with scalloped and painted sides. Perrone says that the work blends elements of African, Persian, Native American, and other traditions. Be that as it may, his color sense is wonderful, notably in a range of peculiarly smoldering pastel hues. Ricard, the lifelong bohemian original, scrawls snatches of his pop-Baudelairean poetry in paint on canvas to sassy, elegant effect. Says one, "and, she'd had so much plastic surgery she didn't recognize me." Through June 28. (Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 212-242-7727.)

DO-HO SUH
A full-scale replica of the artist's unfurnished studio apartment, meticulously stitched from pastel fabric (every hinge, outlet, and light switch is in place),



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floats in the center of the gallery like a diaphanous memory of home. (It also suggests that recurring dream peculiar to New Yorkers, in which cramped longtime apartments mysteriously reveal extra rooms.) The term "soft sculpture" is too substantial to convey the delicacy of Suh's creation, though the sight of a floppy toilet can't help but ring a Claes Oldenburg bell. Through July 11. (Lehman Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923.)

KARA WALKER
Walker's "Drawings" show revisits her fascination with an antebellum America so unreconstructed in its race hatred and sexual cruelty that you don't know whether to flinch or stare. This, of course, is the point; the bare-breasted mammies and coat-tailed massas represent a collective nightmare of repressed (and frenetically returning) history. Walker's themes, which are dense enough to last her decades, haven't changed much, but her technique has. The black-paper silhouettes that made her famous are almost entirely absent, while her exquisite draftsmanship, compositional acuity, and washy yet powerful color take center stage. Through July 25. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262.)

Short List

JILL LEVINE
P.P.O.W, 555 W. 25th St. 212-647-1044. Through June 28.

LISA YUSKAVAGE
Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889. Through June 27.

GALLERIES-SOHO

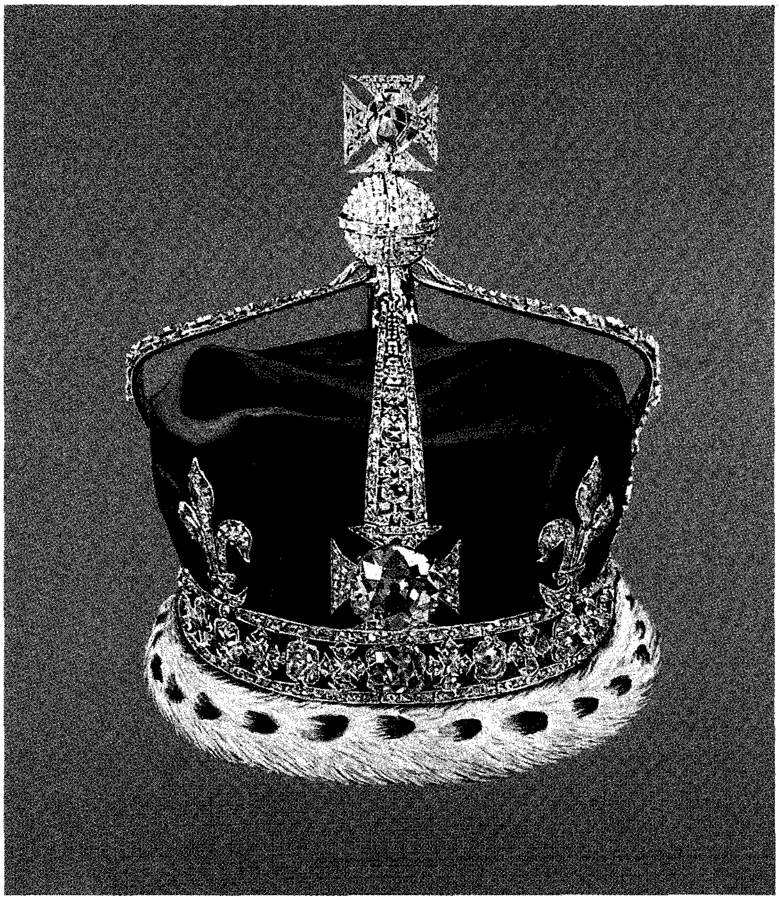
"GIRLS GONE WILD"
The work in this show dares to be bad, in both its subgenres: badass and just plain bad. The twelve mostly twenty-something women artists make brazenly rough-hewn images out of spray paint, makeup, and the cheapest materials around. Mary Weatherford's "Black Cat" is a haikulike image, made of a few swaths of black paint and some tiny seashells on unprimed wood panel. Jutta Koether's "Homo Homo" is the most compelling work—a frenetically drawn closeup of a face betraying incredible ambivalence, ennui, and petulance. It turns out these two are the show's elders. Apparently, it ain't easy being bad. Through July 11. (Bronwyn Keenan, 3 Crosby St. 212-431-5083.)

Short List

COREY MC CORKLE
Maccarone, 45 Canal St. 212-431-4977. Through June 30.

GALLERIES-BROOKLYN

GIBB SLIFE
The artist's début show includes three large oil paintings of instruments of power—a crown, a sceptre, the bejewelled hilt of a sword—and a sculpture of a Saint Sebastian-like mannequin pierced by a quiverful of arrows. Slife, a member of this magazine's staff, has applied latter-day techniques (portrait settings, ad-image lighting, Photo-Realist detail) to invoke a medieval sense of awe. Through July 26. (Kontiki, 653 Metropolitan Ave. 212-334-9255.)



"Bloody Mary," an oil painting by Gibb Slife, at Kontiki.

PHOTOGRAPHY

JEAN-LUC MYLAYNE
The gently obsessive Frenchman points his view camera at some lovely patch of the outdoors—a field, a garden, part of a house—and waits for a bird, any bird, to appear in it. The bird's arrival makes the picture. Mylayne's big color prints call attention to the frame as a proscenium for little feathery dramas. Tilted focal planes produce odd zones of focus, affirming that a camera, not an eye, is doing the looking. The birds are sometimes hard to see—a tiny shape in a thicket, a blur of flight. This tranquil, meditative work, which took great patience to create, imparts it, too. Through Aug. 15. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—**"Cuba on the Verge."** Abelardo Morell, who left Cuba with his family forty years ago, when he was fourteen, is well known for his camera-obscura images of cityscapes and industrial areas, flipped and fuzzy on apartment and hotel walls. His exposures last up to eight hours, and pictures made on a recent trip to Cuba carry an emotional weight, a sense of loss and of feeling trapped, at which his other work can only hint. Other photographers, like Virginia Beahan and Carrie Mae Weems, reach similar heights, whether looking at history or Afro-Cuban identity. The show also gives the opportunity to see work by other, lesser-known Cuban artists, notably Manuel Piña's lushly colored crumbling walls in Havana, Abigail Gonzáles's moments of sexual joy, and René Peña's black-and-white images of handwritten letters sent by Cubans to family members abroad, often asking for financial assistance. The show speaks clearly of the conundrums and fleeting pleasures of living today in Fidel Castro's experiment. Through Aug. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

"INSIDE OUT"
Interior photography often veers toward a dry-as-dust celebration of the banal, but this small group show breaks with tradition and presents uninhabited public places—waiting rooms, hotels, cafés—in rich color and with a looming sense of drama. Speaking of drama, wasn't Sara Gilbert, who has two pieces in the show, Roseanne Barr's daughter in an earlier life? Her pictures of movie and TV sets tweak the interior shot: "Studio City, Work #3" seems to be a house seen from the outside, but it's an electrical-taped fake on a back lot. Jake Chessum's spooky waiting room, with perfectly spaced ashtrays and blood-red carpeting, and Lisa Kereszi's hotel-room bathroom, two lonely washcloths over a robin's-egg-blue sink, owe a debt to Alfred Hitchcock. Through July 25. (Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 212-727-2752.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERTS IN TOWN

ROULETTE FESTIVAL OF MIXOLOGY 2003
Four concerts of audiovisual works, performed by a clutch of composers and interdisciplinary artists (including David Linton, Ikue Mori, Marina Rosenfeld, and Lary Seven) experimenting with new technology; an hour before each performance, refreshments will be served. An interactive sculptural installation by Douglas Irving Repetto is also on display. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 212-219-8242. June 25-28 at 7. For more information, see www.roulette.org.)

POCKET OPERA PLAYERS
The operas of John Eaton, which combine doggedly modernistic music with a childlike dramatic style, are the focus for this chamber group, which presents the world première of "Salome's Flea Circus" (featuring the dancing clarinettist Jean Kopperud, as an aged femme fatale) along with the New York premières of "Golk" and "Travelling with Gulliver." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. June 25-26 at 8.)

VERTICAL PLAYER REPERTORY: "IDOMENEO"
An intimate staged production of Mozart's potent opera seria, presented in a former factory room in Brooklyn—which also happens to be the apartment of the little indie company's director, Judith Barnes. Nizan Leibovich conducts a promising young cast, who sing with piano accompaniment. (219 Court St., Brooklyn. 212-539-2696. June 25 and June 27 at 8 and June 29 at 4.)

DANIEL BARENBOIM:
THE BEETHOVEN PIANO SONATAS
When Barenboim was still in short pants, one of his mentors, the conductor Igor Markevitch, told the pianist's father that his son played like a conductor, predicting not only the wunderkind's future double career but also his eccentric style of playing—treating piano pieces like reductions of orchestral scores and shaping them freely in provocative and plastic ways. He ends his eight-concert traversal of Beethoven's complete piano sonatas with the Sonatas No. 9 in E Major, No. 4 in E-Flat Major, No. 22 in F Major, and the towering finale, the composer's Sonata No. 32 in C Minor. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. June 26 at 7:30.)

CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY OPERA:
"VERA OF LAS VEGAS"
All the action in Daron Hagen's outrageous new show—subtitled "A Nightmare Cabaret Opera in

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One Act"—takes place in the mind of an I.R.A. militant named Taco Bell, who, while undergoing torture, passes out and finds himself on the run in Las Vegas with his pal Dumdum Devine. Their pursuers include a rogue I.N.S. agent named Doll and a down-and-out transvestite lap dancer named Vera (played by the formidable male soprano and female impersonator Shequida, whose most recent stage appearance was as the opera diva "Jessye Normous"). Hagen describes the work as a "postmodern meditation on the death of love," but, whatever his thematic intent, the eclecticism of the music is dazzling: sharply pointed jazz lines are overlaid with slippery atonal harmony; a plaintive nineteen-seventies folk-rock ballad melds into a Broadway power anthem. Paul Muldoon's libretto is a marvel of virtuosic wordplay, exuberant, unsettling, and heroic by turns. (Thalia Theatre, Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. June 26-27 at 7:30 and 9:30.)

Fabulous
LAS VEG
NEVADA
SHOWBOAT

"Vera of Las Vegas," a surreal cabaret opera by Daron Hagen and Paul Muldoon, receives its world première at Symphony Space on June 26-27.

MUSIC AT THE MORRIS-JUMEL MANSION
The Baroque flautist Andrew Bolotowsky and the recorder player Gregory Bynum offer a concert of French, German, and English music in the lovely octagonal drawing room of New York's oldest remaining Colonial residence. (65 Jumel Terrace, between 160th and 162nd Sts. 212-923-8008. June 28 at 2.)

BARGEMUSIC
June 26-27 at 7:30: Phillip Bush, a long-valued member of New York's new-music scene who now teaches at the University of Michigan, returns to perform several Beethoven sonatas (including the "Moonlight" and the Sonata in E Major, Op. 109) under the long shadow of Daniel Barenboim, who's currently hanging his hat at Carnegie Hall; expect these to be lighter and more sharply detailed performances. ♦ June 28 at 7:30 and June 29 at 4: The violinist Mark Peskanov leads a motley crew of strings and horns in two divertimentos by Mozart. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

"FREE FOR ALL AT TOWN HALL": JOSHUA BELL AND SIMON MULLIGAN
The violinist and the pianist, two of Sony Classical's more dashing young stars, are the latest duo to appear in this series of free concerts. They offer music by Bach (the Chaconne for Solo Violin), Schubert, and Janáček, along with selections announced from the stage. (123 W. 43rd St. June 29 at 5. Tickets will be available at the box office starting at noon on the day of the concert.)

OUT OF TOWN

NORFOLK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
Each summer the faculty of the Yale School of Music decamps to the carefully tended grounds of the Ellen Battell Stoeckel estate for two months of teaching and concertizing; most events are given in the estate's Music Shed, a noble, wood-lined venue that once hosted the likes of Rachmaninoff and Sibelius. A preliminary round of contemporary-music presentations starts the season, featuring the composers Bright Sheng and Martin Bresnick and the composer-pianist Joan Tower, among others. (June 25-27, June 30, and July 1 at 7:30.) ♦ The season proper begins with the trendy young new-music group eighth blackbird, who offer music by such composers as David Schober and Daniel Kellogg. (June 28 at 8.) (Routes 44 and 272, Norfolk, Conn. 860-542-3000.)

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL
The festival, Westchester's quieter, more genteel answer to Tanglewood, presents a piquantly varied week of concerts. June 26 at 6: The early-music ensemble Rebel, renowned for its fervently emotional performances, offers "Telemann alla Polacca"—a concert featuring music inspired by the composer's years in Poland. ♦ June 27 at 8: The Brentano String Quartet—the brainiest of the hot young American quartets—gives an encore performance of "The Bach Project" (originally presented by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, in March), ten short works commissioned from such masters as Nicholas Maw, Charles Wuorinen, Shulamit Ran, and Wynton Marsalis, each designed to be interspersed with the canons and contrapuncti of Bach's "Art of Fugue." ♦ June 28 at 8: Roberto Abbado conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in music by Schumann, Mozart (the Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, with Stefan Jackiw), and Mendelssohn (the "Scottish" Symphony). ♦ June 29 at 4:30: An afternoon of Bach, Dvořák (the "Dumky" Trio), and Daniel Schnyder (the jazz-minded Swiss composer's recent Piano Trio), performed by the deft and glamorous gals of the Eroica Trio. (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

BERKSHIRE OPERA COMPANY
The company may be trimming its sails a bit for its latest production, a semi-staged **"La Traviata,"** but it hasn't gone stingy on casting. Maureen O'Flynn takes the title role, sharing the stage with the Metropolitan Opera veterans William Stone (as Germont) and John Cheek (as Dr. Grenvil); the tenor John Bellemer, a relative newcomer, is featured in the role of Alfredo. The director is Mary Duncan; Joel Revzen conducts. (Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, 14 Castle St., Great Barrington, Mass. June 26 at 8. ♦ Koussevitzky Performing Arts Center, Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield, Mass. June 28 and June 30 at 8. For tickets to all performances, call 413-442-0099.)

TANNERY POND CONCERTS
Christian Steiner's very personal concert series, which so far this season has featured such illustrious good friends as the singers Susan Graham and Ben Heppner, continues with a concert by two exciting younger artists—the violinist Latica Honda-Rosenberg (the first German to be a finalist in the Tchaikovsky Competition) and the pianist Kirill Gerstein, who offer a program that includes sonatas by Beethoven and Brahms and lighter fare by Medtner, Szymanowski, and Gershwin. (New Lebanon, N.Y. 888-820-1696. June 28 at 8.)

OPERA FESTIVAL OF NEW JERSEY
When this festival started out twenty years ago, performances were given at a high school, with patrons picnicking on the lawn at intermissions, Glyndebourne-style. Now the company offers performances in Princeton University's McCarter Theatre, which has the kind of modern facilities that enable it to mount productions of three operas (all company premières) in a compressed three-week repertory season. And you can still eat outside. June 29 at 2: Rossini's **"L'Italiana in Algeri,"** with the Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Maria Zifchak (as Isabella) leading a cast that also includes Eduardo Chama, Michael Colvin, and Tonna Miller; Daniel Beckwith conducts. ♦ July 1 at 7:30: Tchaikovsky's **"Eugene Onegin,"** with Frédérique Vézina (as Tatiana), Stephen Powell (as Onegin), Jennifer Hines, and Richard Clement; Dean Williamson. (Princeton, N.J. 866-636-5858.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS
Call it the "other Woodstock." Maverick, nestled in the woods just outside the countercultural haven's town center, is the oldest chamber-music festival in America; its concerts are held in a faux Fijian-Gothic construction supported by bare tree trunks, inside of which string quartets, pianists, and singers make music in a warm and enveloping space that's equal parts chapel and hunting lodge. (Seats, which continue beyond the hall under a canopy of trees, are first come, first served, and no reservations are accepted.) This season, the series has a new musical director, Alexander Platt (the conductor-in-residence at Chicago Opera Theatre), the first performing musician to lead the organization in several decades. The season opens with a performance by the St. Lawrence String Quartet, who bring their hot-blooded style to music by Mozart, Tchaikovsky, and Shostakovich (the Quartet No. 3 in F Major). (Woodstock, N.Y. 845-679-8217. June 29 at 3.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN
June 29 at 3: The Jacques Thibaud Trio, with the pianist Tao Lin, offer a program that features Beethoven's Serenade in D Major for String Trio, Op. 8, along with Piano Quartets by Mozart and Brahms. (Routes 63 and 126, Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"CENTRAL PARK BIOBLITZ"
Meet *Nannarrup hoffmani*, New York's poster child for biodiversity: a half-inch-long carnivorous killing machine with forty-one pairs of legs and a set of poisonous fangs. When scientists identified the centipede last summer, it became the first new species discovered in Central Park in more than a century. But with millions of unidentified invertebrates in the world, *N. hoffmani* might just have some mysterious neighbors. Beginning at noon on June 27, hundreds of scientists and nature lovers will seek them out as they scour the Park's eight hundred and forty-three acres, cataloguing as many species of flora and fauna as possible. It's all part of a twenty-four-hour effort that also includes walking tours and lectures by the likes of the naturalist Jim Fowler ("Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom," "The Today Show") and the noted diver and marine biologist Sylvia Earle. For more information, call 212-628-8383 or visit www.nycbioblitz.org.

READINGS
June 26 at 6: Leslie Marshall reads from her début novel, "A Girl Could Stand Up," which concerns an orphan raised by pair of uncles, one of them a cross-dresser. (The Corner Bookstore, Madison Ave. at 93rd St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ June 26 at 7: Elizabeth Macklin, Robert Polito, Eileen Myles, and other poets who contributed to the latest issue of the literary journal *Open City* read from their work. (Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ June 30 at 6:30: In conjunction with the exhibit "Dreaming in Pictures: The Photography of Lewis Carroll," the International Center of Photography and the Poetry Society of America offer a reading of classic Carroll poems and excerpts from "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass." The actors Mark Linn-Baker and Maria Tucci will do the honors. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. For more information, call 212-254-9628.)

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MOVIES OPENING

CHARLIE'S ANGELS: FULL THROTTLE
Lucy Liu, Drew Barrymore, and Cameron Diaz return as the crime-fighting trio, in a sequel directed by McG. The cast includes Bernie Mac, Demi Moore, Luke Wilson, Crispin Glover, and Matt LeBlanc. Opening June 27.

HELL'S HIGHWAY
Bret Wood's documentary about Highway Safety Inc., the Ohio-based company that made grisly high-school driver's-ed films with titles such as "Wheels of Tragedy" and "Highways of Agony." Opening June 27. (Cinema Village.)

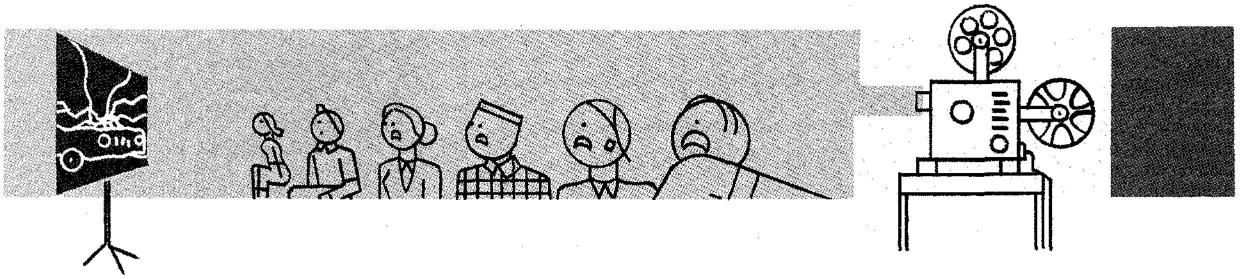
HUMAN WEAPON
Ilan Ziv directed this documentary about suicide bombers. It's paired with "My Terrorist," in which the director Yulie Cohen Gerstel interviews the Iraqi Popular Front member who attacked her in London in 1978. Opening June 25. (Film Forum.)

ON_LINE
An experimental drama about two New York friends (Josh Hamilton and Harold Perrineau) who run an X-rated Web site. Opening June 27. (Cinema Village.)

28 DAYS LATER
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening June 27. (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square.)

FILM NOTES

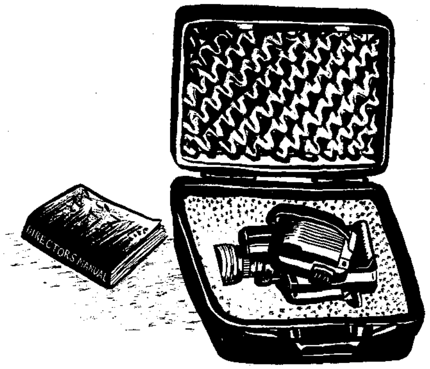
L'ATALANTE
To miss out on this movie should be a civil offense punishable by law. It has often been acclaimed as the masterwork of the French director Jean Vigo, although his admirers would politely point out that masterworks were all he was capable of making. The story tells of a pair of newlyweds who spend their honeymoon travelling down the Seine toward Paris and the sea. In some inexplicable way, it feels like the complete portrait of a marriage. We get sulks, stabs of jealousy, complicit smiles in the morning, and moments of desire that startle even now; how they must have looked in 1934, goodness only knows. If the couple's senses are lit by love, Vigo's are on fire, and the film remains an astonishing exploration of texture, from its famous shots of the bride, in the brilliant white of her wedding dress, stepping along the fog-slicked darkness of the boat, to the husband's wild searchings for her beneath the Seine. With a rude and rasping Michel Simon as the ship's mate—an animal answer to the lyrical longings elsewhere. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (Gramercy Theatre; June 26.)



Opening June 27, "Hell's Highway," a documentary about high-school driver's-ed films from the sixties and seventies.

LAURENT CILLUFFO

L'AUBERGE ESPAGNOLE
The title of Cédric Klapisch's film means, in French slang, a free-for-all. This charming, utterly undramatic sketchbook movie is about a twenty-five-year-old Parisian graduate student, Xavier (Romain Duris), who goes to Spain as part of a European exchange program and lives with a polyglot mix of students in a cramped walkup apartment. The hero is instructed in lovemaking techniques by a lesbian roommate; he then has an affair with a luscious but vacuous married woman (Judith Godrèche). Not much happens, but the characters, searching for



romance and good times, wander through Barcelona's handsome ochre streets, across the Gaudi pavilions and the sun-drenched piazzas; the movie is as much a love letter to the slowed-down erotic pleasures of the city as the New Wave films were to the endless social and intellectual enchantments of Paris. In English, French, Danish, Spanish, and Catalan.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 5/19/03.) (Kew Gardens Cinema, New York Twin, and Union Square.)

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM
A crowd-pleasing British movie devoted to the radical idea that girls can play soccer and sprain their ankles. Jess (Parminder Nagra) is a Sikh who hides her love of the game from her conservative parents, while Jules (Keira Knightley) is a tomboy who defies her English mother. Both have a thing for their Irish coach, Joe (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers)—he of the wounded knee and the watery eyes. The movie is a hodgepodge: nicely barbed scenes with Jess's family bump against weird practice montages that play like sports-bra ads. What it all adds up to is multicultural empowerment for the pre-teen shin-guard crowd.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

BONHOEFFER
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Quad Cinema.)

BRUCE ALMIGHTY
Jim Carrey as an all-powerful being? Please, God, no. In this underwhelming comedic parable, Carrey is the titular Bruce, a "wacky" Buffalo newscaster who is granted dominion over his home town by God (Morgan Freeman in a white suit). Half-baked comic conceits can sometimes be saved by inspired performances, but no one besides Carrey seems to be having much fun, and he's relying on his goofy faces again. The movie's subtext refers to Carrey's own career: his character uses his powers to become an anchor and do "serious news," but then decides that making people laugh is just as worthy. Fair enough, but the laughs never arrive. With Jennifer Aniston, who looks frightened most of the time.—*M.A.* (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

CAPTURING THE FRIEDMANS
Andrew Jarecki's startling documentary offers an approach to truth as richly nuanced but ultimately as futile as Kurosawa's great "Rashomon." In 1987, in Great Neck, Long Island, the police arrested a beloved retired schoolteacher, Arnold Friedman, and his son Jesse on the charge of sexually abusing the young boys who regularly gathered at the Friedman home for computer lessons. Jarecki interviews the police, the attorneys, the judge, and the alleged victims in the case, but the heart of the movie is the family's own footage: the layers of Friedman home movies and stills and the voluminous videos shot by David Friedman, the oldest Friedman boy, throughout the crisis. The two accused men were part of a loving family of five, although Mrs. Friedman, emotionally stranded by her husband, was not part of the jokes and the camaraderie. Before our astounded eyes the entire fantastic mess unfolds like a bloody Greek legend—the House of Atreus reincarnated in a middle-class Jewish family. Edited by Richard Hankin.—*D.D.* (6/2/03) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3, Kew Gardens Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

FINDING NEMO
The latest flood of wizardry from Pixar, whose productions, from "Toy Story" onward, have lent an indispensable vigor and wit to the sagging art of mainstream animation. Whether the new movie, directed by Andrew Stanton, will add much to that resuscitation is another matter. Albert Brooks provides the voice of Marlin, a non-amusing clown fish who sees his young son, Nemo, borne off in a diver's net. Not to be daunted, and plainly unfazed by the threat of both sharks and sentimentality, Marlin sets off to rescue his only child. You'll never guess how it ends. The technical skill on show is beyond question, but, as yet another computer-generated seascape ripples past, you may be tempted to ask whether that skill is driving the story; Marlin just drifts from one semi-heroic feat to the next, and the characters seldom get their hooks, or their jaws, into you with the pointed, snippy comedy that we have come to associate with Woody and Buzz Lightyear. Also, not to be impolite or anything, but how expressive is a fish, until it hits a grill? With the voices of Geoffrey Rush, Barry Humphries, Willem Dafoe, Allison Janney, and—the funniest of the shoal—Ellen DeGeneres.—*A.L.* (6/9/03) (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

FRIDAY NIGHT
A woman (Valérie Lemercier) in Paris preparing to move in with her boyfriend the next morning gets stuck in a traffic jam, allows a strange man (Vincent Lindon) into her car, and goes to bed with him in a hotel without exchanging more than a few words. The movie is about a momentary connection made in the night, but the director Claire Denis's technique, which depends on non-continuous cutting, produces disconnection. In the end, not much happens between these two. The movie is dark-toned and rather furtive, its emotional transactions attenuated to the point of nullity. A perfect one-night stand is no doubt a familiar fantasy, but this movie has been made without fantasy. In French.—*D.D.* (6/16 & 23/03) (Quad Cinema.)

HOLLYWOOD HOMICIDE
Yet another comedy about mismatched cops who learn to love and respect each other. This time, it's a creaky Harrison Ford as the stubbled veteran and a low-wattage Josh Harnett as the eager rookie. Ron Shelton's script and direction are lacklustre—the agreeable manly banter of some of his previous films is missing. In its place are all of the hallmarks of formula filmmaking: the endless chases, the sophomoric

quips, and the myriad urban stereotypes.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 16, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

THE ITALIAN JOB

Edward Norton, pulling his chin down and showing off a mean spot of beard, acts the mild and recessive Mark Wahlberg off the screen in this elaborate international heist movie about bad and good gold thieves. As a piece of summer-season craftsmanship the movie is fine: the camera rises majestically over the Dolomites, and in Venice, speedboats churn up the canals and head into blind turns. There's a dangerous-looking chase in which a small black helicopter hovers right over a car in the streets of Los Angeles, and the director F. Gary Gray uses a fleet of buzzing, squared-off Minis extremely well, shooting the tiny cars into a subway tunnel just ahead of a train, making them jump and spin and flip like toys. Don't expect much more, however, than a pleasant workout. Seth Green and Mos Def are very funny in minor roles. With the creamy Charlize Theron as the daughter of master criminal Donald Sutherland.—*D.D.* (6/16 & 23/03) (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East Cinemas, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

LILYA 4-EVER

Lilya (Oksana Akinshina) is a chirpy girl of sixteen, sunk in a stagnant backwater of what used to be the Soviet Union. She is, to all intents and purposes, orphaned when her witch of a mother abandons her to seek a life in America. Lilya starts with practically nothing and goes downhill from there, winding up selling her body to the vulpine patrons of a bar; what redeems the movie—what renders a squalid experience quite sacred in its intensity—is the vehemence with which the writer and director, Lukas Moodysson, asks whether his heroine has also sold her soul. The caustic portrait that he paints of his native Sweden, to which the deluded Lilya is transported in her quest for a future, has brought him both outrage and acclaim; what is beyond doubt is the brio of his storytelling and the branding of the girl's misfortune onto our hearts and nerves. With Artiom Bogucharski as the artless dodger who becomes her only friend. In German, Swedish, English, and Russian.—*A.L.* (4/21 & 28/03) (Cinema Village.)

MANITO

A drama about two brothers—one an ex-con, the other a graduating high-school student—and their troubled Washington Heights family. The writer-director, Eric Eason, working on a credit-card budget, cast his movie with neighborhood people, and his intimate, mobile shooting style (the camera seems to be cradled on his shoulder) is ideal for this kind of vérité filmmaking. The movie is dramatically tense and violent in a style that feels captured, not manufactured.—*B.D.* (Village East Cinemas.)

MAN ON THE TRAIN

The French director Patrice Leconte, having flitted from one genre to the next with movies as different as "Ridicule" and "The Girl on the Bridge," has now settled on his most consoling subject: the comedy of good companionship. Johnny Hallyday (who was, in his time, France's answer to Elvis) plays Milan, a low-level hit man who arrives, at the bluish end of a day, in a small French town and accepts the offer of a room from Manesquier (Jean Rochefort), a retired schoolteacher. For an hour, not much happens, and we are granted the languorous—and, to many filmgoers, increasingly rare—pleasure of watching two people lock gently together. They even trade roles: Rochefort, the most playful melancholic in cinema, learns to fire a gun, while Hallyday takes up pipe and slippers. All of this is delectable: Leconte has a taste for minor, chewed-up lives, and you can't help sighing with regret as he gathers his wits and hurries the plot toward an unnecessary climax. In French.—*A.L.* (5/12/03) (Cinema Village, Kew Gardens, and Sutton 1 and 2.)

THE MERRY WIDOW

Ernst Lubitsch's euphoric 1934 version of the Franz Lehar operetta deftly blends "Duck Soup" farce with worldly romance. Maurice Chevalier plays the designated suitor to an incomparably wealthy widow (Jeanette MacDonald), whose emigration to Paris from the sheep-and-cow kingdom of Marshovia disrupts the lives of everyone from the king to the "shepherd in the street." (The king deputizes Chevalier to woo MacDonald after discovering him with the queen.) Lubitsch turns his previous use of the Chevalier-MacDonald team upside down: he satirizes Chevalier's amorous glibness and makes MacDonald's startling, sexy ardor the apex of the movie. Lubitsch's staging of the "Merry Widow Waltz" has a surging magic—it grows more seductive, and funnier, the longer the intoxicated waltzers dance on—and the slaphappy comedy bits from the likes of Sterling Holloway, Donald Meek, Herman Bing, and (at his very best) Edward Everett Horton offer just the right comic respite from the heavy-breathing courtship.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; June 29-30.)

At the Thalia Theatre, the 1953 sci-fi classic "The War of the Worlds."

NATHAN FOX

THE SHOP AROUND THE CORNER

Close to perfection—one of the most beautifully acted and paced romantic comedies ever made in this country. This 1940 film is set in the enclosed world of the people who work together in a small department store; Margaret Sullavan and James Stewart are the employees who bicker with each other, and in no other movie has this kind of love-hate been made so convincing. Their performances are full of grace notes; when you watch later James Stewart films, you may wonder what became of this other deft, sensitive, pre-drawling Stewart. As for Sullavan, this is a peerless performance: she makes the shopgirl's pretenses believable, lyrical, and funny. The script by Samson Raphaelson is a free adaptation of a play by Nikolaus Laszlo, and though it's all set in a Hollywood Budapest the director, Ernst Lubitsch, sustains a faintly European tone.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; June 26-28.)

SPELLBOUND

Jeffrey Blitz's charming documentary follows eight elementary students competing in the 1999 National Spelling Bee; he rode the bus to school with them, interviewed their teachers, checked out their rooms, and, in one case, listened while a kid talked like a robot. The sample of children is appropriately diverse—in region, in race, in the intensity of their preparations. Some of their parents see the spelling bee as representing the immigrant dream of America in miniature, while others seem amazed at the intensity of their nerdy offspring. The competitions are tense, and Blitz cobbles together a series of heartbreaking reaction shots of errant spellers. His direction shows a clever, occasionally flippant selection of detail—the dog-eared unabridged dictionaries, the congratulatory sign posted outside Hooters, the prodigy who signs his autographs "Trust in Jesus."—*M.A.* (Cinema 2, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, and Quad Cinema.)

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

Spaceships from Mars, which resemble flying wings with serpentine periscopes, level much of California because the armed forces of the good old U.S.A. (including our own flying wing) are no match for them. Set up from the pre-credits sequence as a parable of the arms race, in many ways this 1953 George Pal production (directed by Byron Haskin and written by Barré Lyndon) is an essential piece of paranoid Cold War sci-fi. But it's also a junky adaptation of H. G. Wells' novel, with Gene Barry wearing horn-rimmed glasses to play a "Pacific Tech" scientist who analyzes the Martians' electromagnetic ingenuity and appears to be magnetic himself—no sooner do he and his love interest (Ann Robinson) take shelter in an abandoned farmhouse than another Martian vehicle crashes into it. The movie helped cement the formula of godless aliens wreaking Technicolor carnage before divine providence catches up to them.—*M.S.* (Thalia Theatre; June 28-29.)

WINGED MIGRATION

The French filmmaker Jacques Perrin shows us things we have never seen before: the alien world of insects in "Microcosmos" and, now, migrating birds in all their airborne glory. Perrin and his team of camera operators employ remote-control gliders and balloons to astonishing effect—the camera literally flies alongside the birds as they wing their way north and south in their search for food. They capture some amazing solo efforts, like the common murre who plunges off a ten-story seaside cliff, as well as the beauty of numbers, as in the scene of an entire flock of white-faced whistling ducks, all turning their heads at once. The images are mostly left alone, with minimal dialogue and endurable New Age music. Bird-lovers will be in heaven, and the less ornithologically inclined will be surprised to learn that some Canada geese don't hang around golf courses all winter. Among the more unforgettable birds on display is the Clark's grebe, which can pull off the cool trick of walking on water.—*M.A.* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

HULK
Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.

RESPIRO
Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.

WHALE RIDER
BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 1, Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kew Gardens Cinema, 81-05 Lefferts Blvd., Queens (718-441-9835).
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (212-334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through June 29: "Dark Dreams, Dangerous Places: The Cinema of Roman Polanski." June 28 at 1:30: "Chinatown" (1974). ♦ June 28 at 4: "The Tenant" (1976). ♦ June 29 at 1: "Tess" (1979). ♦ June 29 at 4:30: "Bitter Moon" (1992). ♦ Repertory nights. June 28-29 at 6:30: "Ugetsu" (1953, Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through June 30: "Village Voice: Best of 2002." June 25 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "What Time Is It There?" (2001, Tsai Ming-liang; in Mandarin and French). ♦ June 26 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Cul de Sac: A Suburban War Story" (2002, Garrett Scott) and "An Injury to One" (2003, Travis Wilkerson). ♦ June 27 at 2, 5:30, and 9: "The Fast Runner" (2002, Zacharias Kunuk; in Inuktitut). ♦ June 28 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Monday Morning" (2002, Otar Iosseliani; in French). ♦ June 29 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Road" (2002, Darejan Omirbaev; in Kazakh). ♦ June 30 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "All or Nothing" (2002, Mike Leigh). ♦ Starting July 1: Audrey Hepburn films. July 1 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Children's Hour" (1961, William Wyler).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through July 3: "The Lubitsch Touch," a three-week retrospective of the German director's career. June 25 at 2, 5:30 and 9: "One Hour with You" (1932; co-directed with George Cukor). ♦ June 25 at 3:40 and 7:10: "The Smiling Lieutenant" (1931). ♦ June 26-28 at 1:20, 5:20, and 9:20: "To Be or Not to Be" (1942). ♦ June 26-28 at 3:20 and 7:20: "The Shop Around the Corner" (†). ♦ June 29 at 1:20, 5:20, and 9:20 and June 30 at 1 and 5: "The Merry Widow" (†). ♦ June 29 at 3:20 and 7:20 and June 30 at 3: "The Student Prince" (1927). ♦ June 30 at 7:10: "Romeo and Juliet in the Snow" (1920). ♦ June 30 at 8:10: "Anna Boleyn" (1920). ♦ July 1 at 3:20 and 7:15: "The Love Parade" (1929). ♦ July 1 at 1:30, 5:25, and 9:15: "Monte Carlo" (1930).

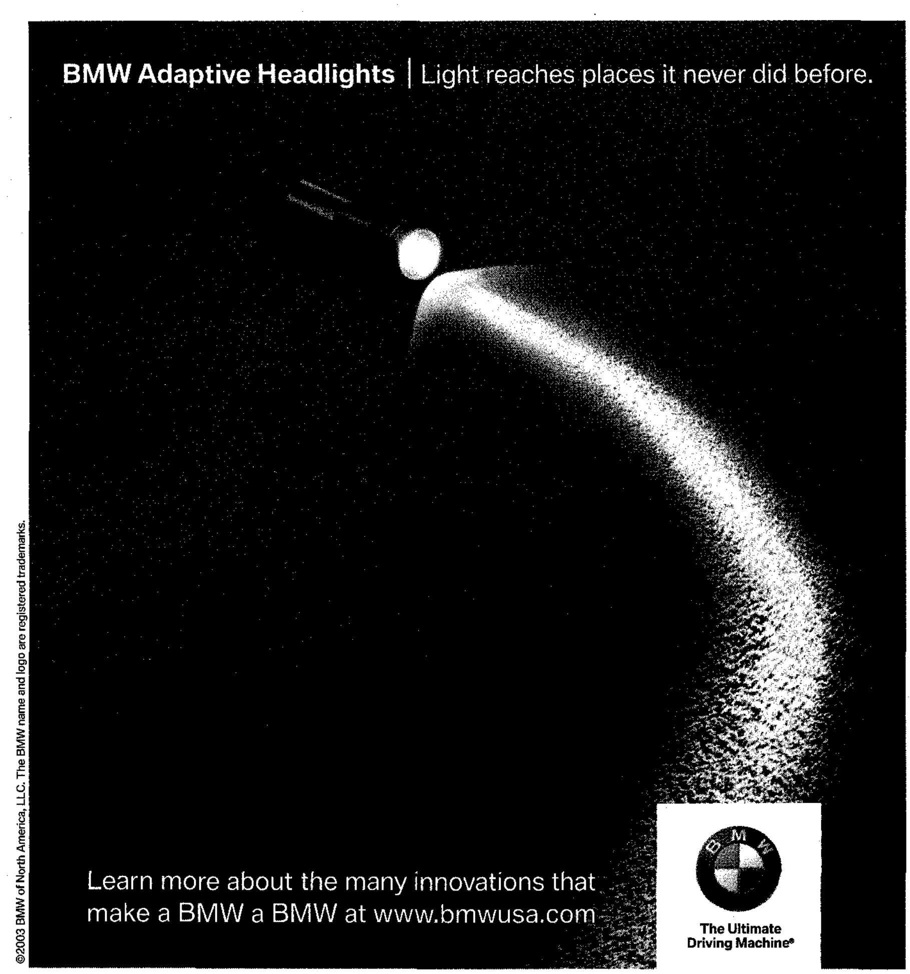
FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-315-6160)—The comedies of Sacha Guitry. July 1 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Remontons les Champs-Elysées" (1938; in French).

GRAMERCY THEATRE
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through July 4: "To Save and Project," restored and preserved films. June 26 at 2: "L'Atalante" (†), shown with "The Life of a River: The Seine" (1931, Jean Lods; in French) and unedited rushes from "L'Atalante." ♦ June 26 at 4:45: "The Burglar" (1957, Paul Wendkos). ♦ June 26 at 6:30: "The Dentist" (1932, Leslie Pearce) and "The Projectionist" (1970, Harry Hurwitz). ♦ June 26 at 8:45: "The Red Pony" (1949, Lewis Milestone). ♦ June 27 at 2 and June 30 at 6: "The Imperial Imagination: A Compendium of Ethnographic Films" (1912-71). ♦ June 27 at 4 and June 29 at 3:30: "Backroads" (1977, Philip Noyce) and "The Singer and the Dancer" (1977, Gillian Armstrong). ♦ June 27 at 9: "À Propos de Nice" (1930, Jean Vigo; in French), "La Natation par Jean Taris, Champion de France" (1931, Vigo; in French), and "La Dolorosa" (1935, Jean Grémillon; in Spanish). ♦ June 29 at 1: "The Rite of Spring" (1963, Manoel de Oliveira; in Portuguese). ♦ June 29 at 6 and June 30 at 8: "The Miracle of the Wolves" (1926, Raymond Bernard). ♦ Special screening. June 28 at 1: "La Maison du Mystère" (1923, Alexandre Volkoff; in French).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. June 27-28: "Waiting for Guffman" (1996, Christopher Guest).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Through July 13: Sci-Fi Flick Fest. June 28 at 2 and June 29 at 6:15: "The Fifth Element" (1997, Luc Besson). ♦ June 28 at 4:15 and June 29 at 8:30: "12 Monkeys" (1995, Terry Gilliam). ♦ June 28 at 7:30 and June 29 at 2: "The Day the Earth Stood Still" (1951, Robert Wise). ♦ June 28 at 9:15 and June 29 at 3:45: "The War of the Worlds" (†).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through July 10: "Heroic Grace: The Chinese Martial Arts Film." All films are shown in their original language. June 27 at 1:30 and 6:15 and June 28 at 4: "Blood Brothers" (1973, Zhang Che). ♦ June 27 at 3:50 and 8:40 and June 29 at 3:45: "One-Armed Swordsman" (1967, Zhang). ♦ June 28 at 1:30 and 6:30: "Red Heroine" (1929, Wen Timin). ♦ June 28 at 8:45 and June 30 at 2 and 6:15: "Intimate Confessions of a Chinese Courtesan" (1972, Chu Yuan). ♦ June 29 at 1:30 and 6:30: "Swordswoman of Huangjiang" (1930, Chen Kengran, Zheng Yisheng, and Shang Guanwu). ♦ June 29 at 8:30 and June 30 at 4 and 8:10: "Vengeance!" (1970, Zhang). ♦ July 1 at 2 and 6:15: "Come Drink with Me" (1966, King Hu). ♦ July 1 at 4 and 8:15: "Golden Swallow" (1968, Zhang).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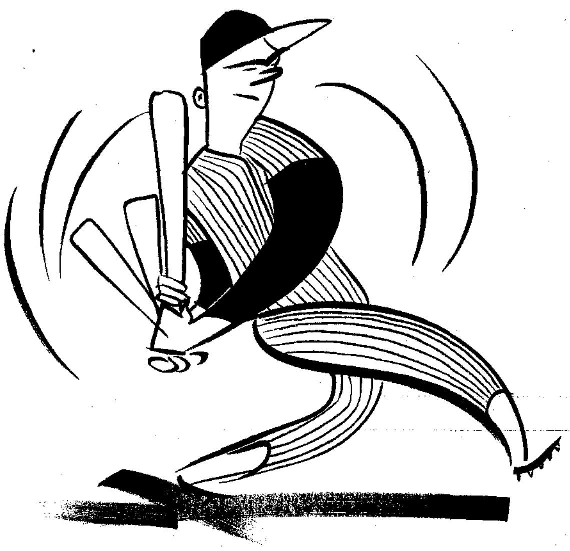
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
SAMMY'S SIN

Sammy Sosa, downcast and repentant, has finished serving his seven-day suspension from baseball for corking his bat, and is back in the middle of the Cubs' batting order, hoping for redemption and a few fat pitches down the line. Replays of his crime—an awkward swing against pitcher Jeremi Gonzalez in the first inning of a game at Wrigley Field against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays; the bat breaking and flying apart in front of the pitcher as the ball was fielded at second base and turned into an easy groundout; the incriminating smudge visible (in midair stop-time) on the pristine, riven wood above the handle—competed with Martha Stewart's bad-hair day on the late and early news, and provided a week's worth of opining and high-minding by the sports columnists and editorialists and call-in radio loonies and, surely, every Little League coach and dad between Tallahassee and Taiwan. Home-plate umpire Tim McClelland looked grave as he examined and then impounded the evidence, and the miserable Sosa, who had left the field, said that he had mistakenly carried a corked batting-practice bat up to the plate in real time. "I apologize to my team, to my fans," Sosa said. "I'll take the blame for it and move on." Major League Baseball, while officially confirming the presence of a foreign substance in the bottom half of the bat (the top chunk mysteriously disappeared from the Cubs' clubhouse before the game was done), X-rayed seventy-six more bats it had removed from Sosa's bin at Wrigley Field and found no corky DNA therein. The Hall of Fame also checked out the five Sosa bats in its archive and declared them pure. M.L.B. sentenced Sosa to an eight-game suspension, which Sammy appealed—this allowed him to play in a big weekend series at home against the Yankees—and he accepted a reduction to seven. Sosa's manager, Dusty Baker, said he hoped the furor "dies down and we can get back to baseball."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL



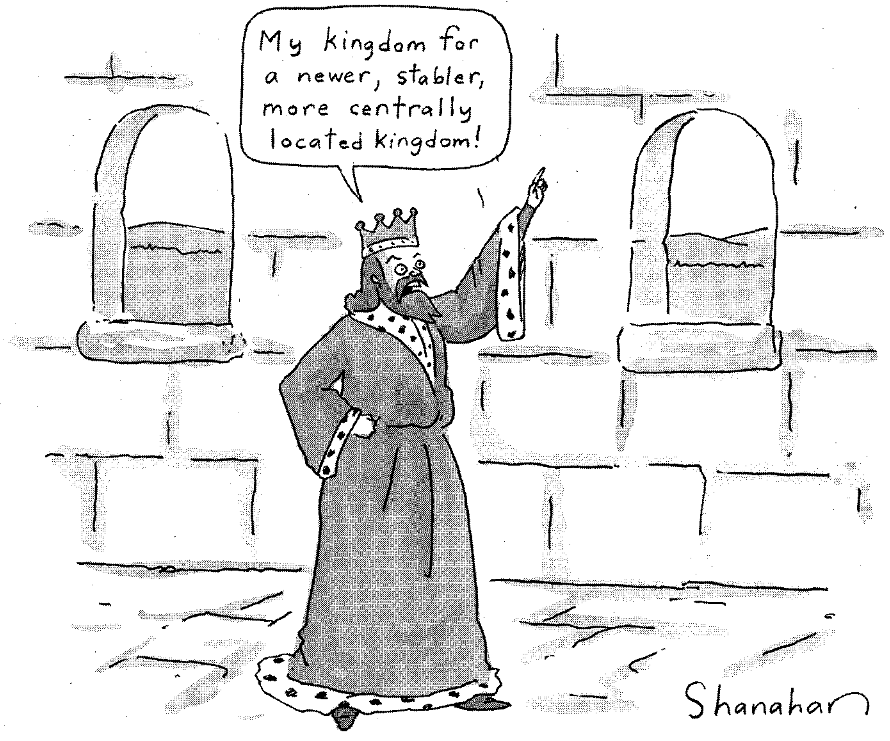
Well, yes, but who among us does not want this delicious malfeasance back again, at the breakfast table and in our imaginings, with its richly chewable mixture of speculation, cynicism, precedent, physics, and laughter? Baseball has had its share of dark days—the Black Sox, Pete Rose, and the players' strike of 1994 and '95 come to mind—but its recurring history of on-the-field chicanery has always held a raffish and comical charm. It's operetta. Think of Graig Nettles's bat flying in half during a 1974 Yankees game against the Tigers and spewing out six Superballs—a goof so ridiculous that he escaped fine and punishment altogether. Think of Albert Belle suffering a confiscation and suspension for corking in 1994—and his Indians teammate Jason Grimsley then crawling through an overhead air-conditioning duct to the umpires' room to retrieve the befouled lumber and replace it with a different bat. (He pulled off the Spider-Man caper but carelessly replaced the stick with one bearing another Indian's signature.)

The pitchers, given their range of opportunities to scuff, roughen, darken, or slime the ball and thereby cause it to imitate a Frisbee or a fruit bat or a diving cormorant as it approaches the plate, have not exactly lagged behind. Gaylord Perry, a Hall of Famer, always offered an imperturbable smile while he stood on the mound with outstretched arms as still another umpire vainly frisked his mitt, cap brim, belt, hair, ears, and uniform in search of the hidden dab of Brylcreem or K-Y Jelly with which he doctored his notorious spitball. The capable lefty Rick Honeycutt, while with the Mariners in 1980, was excused for a term after an ump found a thumbtack affixed to his mitt (legend has it that he began to bleed on the mound after absent-mindedly wiping sweat from his forehead). And Kevin Gross, a starter for the Phillies in the eighties, apologized profusely to the ump when a strip of sandpaper fell out of his mitt on the mound—recollection has it he had been building a doll's house for his little daughter, he said, and carelessly stashed the abrader in the wrong place in his locker.

The Sosa fuss brought a spoilsport scientific rejoinder from Robert Adair, a retired professor of physics at Yale, who claimed that the batters' faith in corked bats was based more on superstition or suggestibility than on scientific truth. Hollowing a bat to make room for cork might lighten it and thereby speed up the batter's swing, he said, but the cork was a negative, and actually decreased the rebound of the bat. Nobody thought to ask Professor Adair about Norm Cash, a long-term first baseman with the Tigers who batted a league-leading .361 his third year in the majors, 1961, but never again produced a season over the magical .300 level. After he retired, he admitted he'd used corked bats in 1961—actually, he admitted he'd used them his entire career. So if that lone .361 was suggestibility it comes at a level matched only by students of Professor Harold Hill's "Think System" of musical instruction in "The Music Man."

Baseball is so implacably difficult to play well, day after day, that it almost requires a little cheating now and then to make it bearable, and it is in this regard—and this one only—that it may be said to imitate life itself. A prurient curiosity, a smiling and semi-complicit "How do they *do* that?" comes over us fans with the news of each fresh case. (You cork a bat by boring a hole down through the top of the bat, inserting something bouncy, and packing the scar with sawdust and varnish. You throw a spitball by squeezing the wet ball off your fingertips like a watermelon seed.) It doesn't come up very often—the Sosa suspension was the fourth penalty of its sort in the past decade—and when it does there is the wish that other largely harmless crimes were as juicy to read about and as swift and precise in their resolution. (Could we perhaps sentence Martha Stewart—if she's found guilty—to ten days behind a Kmart counter?) The only sadness here is the taint, the little doubt, that will always be attached to Sosa's name now, despite his sunniness and those career five hundred and six home runs. We can forgive him, even if we question his tale of a batting-practice bat going unrecognized in the heat of the season (and an extended power outage at the plate), and late tonight perhaps forgive ourselves today's not-so-white lie, last week's unpardonable impatience with a boring old friend, and all the pot we used to smoke after the kids had gone to bed.

—*Roger Angell*


My kingdom for a newer, stabler, more centrally located kingdom!
Shanahan

RICHARD THE PRAGMATIST

THE BAR
OOPS

The city's white-shoe law firms have taken a serious hit in the recent economic downturn, but Summer Associate Season, that debauched perennial perkfest for rising 3Ls at Harvard and Fordham and Yale, is up and running (and only slightly diminished), much to the delight of Asia de Cuba, Sparks, and other corporate-card joints that can ply a half-dozen overworked lawyers and pampered will-be esquires with enough Scotch and sirloin for an easy thousand-dollar tab. A thousand dollars isn't even half of what each of the "summers," as they're known, gets paid every week at the biggest shops. And, to listen to Jonas Blank, a tall, handsome summer resident at Skadden Arps, the biggest of the big, a great deal of effort need not be expended to collect it.

Inadvertently following the *New York Law Journal's* advice for this summer's associate class ("Stand Out in a Crowd. . . . You still have to distinguish yourself from lots of other very bright people"), Jonas replied to an e-mail from his friend Melissa the other day with a message that was probably news to no one who's familiar with the drill: "I'm busy doing jack shit. Went to a nice 2hr sushi lunch today at Sushi Zen. Nice place. Spent the rest of the day typing

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e-mails and bullshitting with people." Jonas did, unfortunately, have a bit of work to take care of (corporate-finance deal; yawn), so he needed to "peruse these materials and not be a fuckup." But he couldn't complain; he was, after all, a summer associate. He signed off, "So yeah, Corporate Love hasn't worn off yet. . . . But just give me time."

Try two minutes. That was about how long it took the hiring department at Skadden to page Jonas (Duke undergrad, Harvard Law) and put him to work correcting his mistake. Jonas had sent his life-is-good note not to Melissa but to the firm's entire underwriting group. His task was to write an apology to the forty or so attorneys who had already opened the e-mail and reached the conclusion that Jackass might be a better name for him.

Jonas wrote to say that he recognized the damage he'd done to his firm-wide reputation and possibly to his future, and that he was appropriately concerned about "the implicit reflection such behavior could have on the Firm." Recipients of Jonas's apology were less concerned, however, about the firm's rep—"I thought they taught the summers how to use e-mail," one Skaddenite wrote to another—and within minutes the legal grapevine was buzzing. Before long, Jonas, who is from Virginia, was a celebrity in Milwaukee, Austin, and L.A. Across Sixth Avenue from Skadden, Jonas's Journal became a memo (Subject: FW: FW: FW: RE:—) addressed to the summer associates at Kronish Lieb: "This is a good lesson in what NOT to do."

Jonas's goof is this season's addition to the ever-growing Corporate Oops genre, and, as such humiliations go, it is relatively tame. Certainly it's no match for 2001's most celebrated legal e-mail, a farewell note dispatched by a departing summer associate to his colleagues at Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft. The author, apparently, was not a fan of summer camp for lawyers ("I did not get shit-faced drunk like the rest of you"), but he had more specific complaints, about the firm's bigotry ("Because of my Italian-American heritage I was singled out") and its leisure pursuits ("I will also not speak of the blatant cocaine use in people's offices"). "I can proudly say that I am now no person's bitch," he declared.

That same year, there was also Peter Chung, a twenty-four-year-old Princeton grad who went to work for the Carlyle Group, in Seoul. Peter, who was living the foreign-financier version of the summer-associate life—sprawling pad, lavish feasts, nights on the town in his V.P.'s Porsche—alerted a dozen or so friends to his good fortune. The e-mail announced his plan to be fresh out of condoms (he'd brought forty) before the week (his second in Korea) was up. "CHUNG is KING of his domain here in Seoul," he proclaimed. Chung was, instead, "resigned" from his domain at the Carlyle Group before the week was up, after his enthusiasm quickly spread across several continents, and back across his V.P.'s desk.

Corporate Love wore off pretty quickly for Chung, and it had clearly already run its course for the Cadwalader snitch, but the insider speculation in these parts is that Jonas will not only live to see his Camp Skadden farewell dinner (the summer associate gets to name the place and the principals) but even be offered a chance to come back next summer, as a first-year associate. Then the real punishment begins.

—*Ben McGrath*

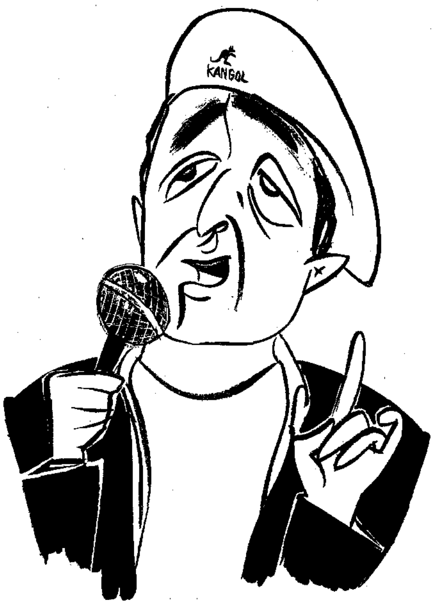
OPENING ACTS
DOM AND CHER

The other night, the comedian Dom Irrera sat on a ratty sofa backstage at Madison Square Garden, waiting to go on as Cher's opening act. The platters of crudités and bite-size Mr. Goodbars on his dressing-room table looked as if they'd gone undisturbed since about 1974. Irrera's girlfriend, Sophie Perreault, who was wearing a barely sufficient leopard-print bustier, poured herself a glass of red wine and sat down beside him.

"What about me?" Irrera said. "I gotta go on in front of twenty thousand people."

"You're not as good when you drink," Perreault replied.

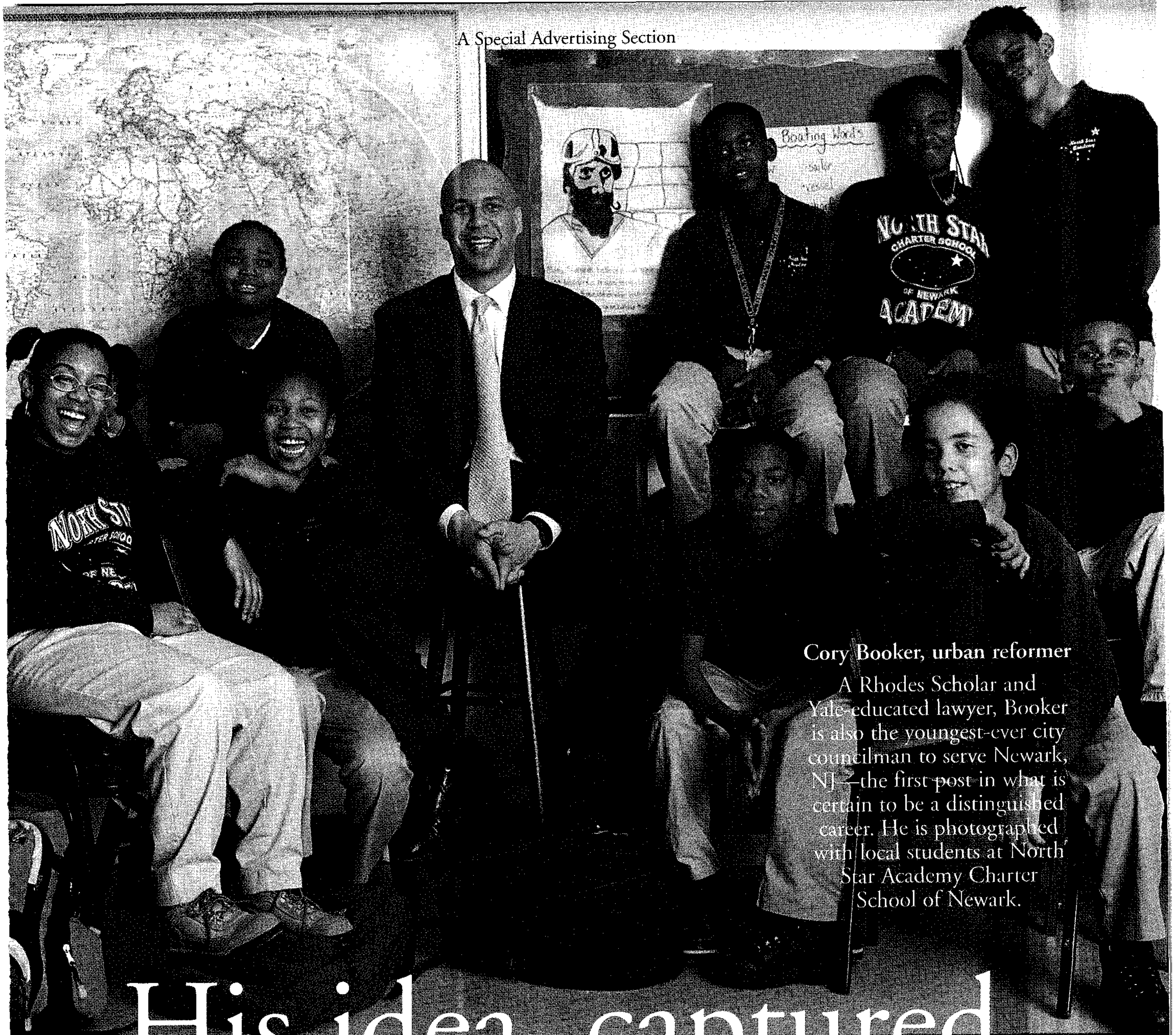
"I'm good when I drink," he said. "I'm not good when I'm drunk." Irrera is in his late forties and has a doughy, resigned face. He made his name with wise-guy routines punctuated by catchphrases—"Bada-boom, bada-bing!"; "Fuhgeddaboutit!"—from his Italian-American neighborhood in South Philadelphia, and his choice of white athletic socks under black jeans indicated that he was still keeping it real.



Dom Irrera

Irrera first opened for Cher in 1990, when he was less established, and he seemed bewildered to be on board thirteen years later for her farewell tour, which has already logged more than a hundred and forty shows and is scheduled to last, Irrera said, "another twenty, twenty-five years." He added, "There's no connection at all between our acts. I guess she just likes having me on the bus—we actually sleep in the same roll-out cot." Bada-boom, bada-bing!

There is a noble tradition of comedians kicking things off for singers who just like having them around: Tom Dreesen often opened for Sinatra, as Sammy Shore did for Elvis. There is an equally noble tradition of comedians complaining about the gig. "The rooms are too big, and no one is there to see *you*," said Irrera, who once opened for Joan Jett at the Asbury Park Convention Hall and was booed off the stage after three minutes. "Brad Garrett, from 'Everybody Loves Raymond,' told me he opened for Sinatra one time and said"—gruff, adenoidal Garrett voice—" 'Hey, folks, thanks a lot. Stick around for Frank!' And that guy Jilly" (Jilly Rizzo, Sinatra's enforcer) "comes over and goes"—Italian-henchman voice—



Cory Booker, urban reformer

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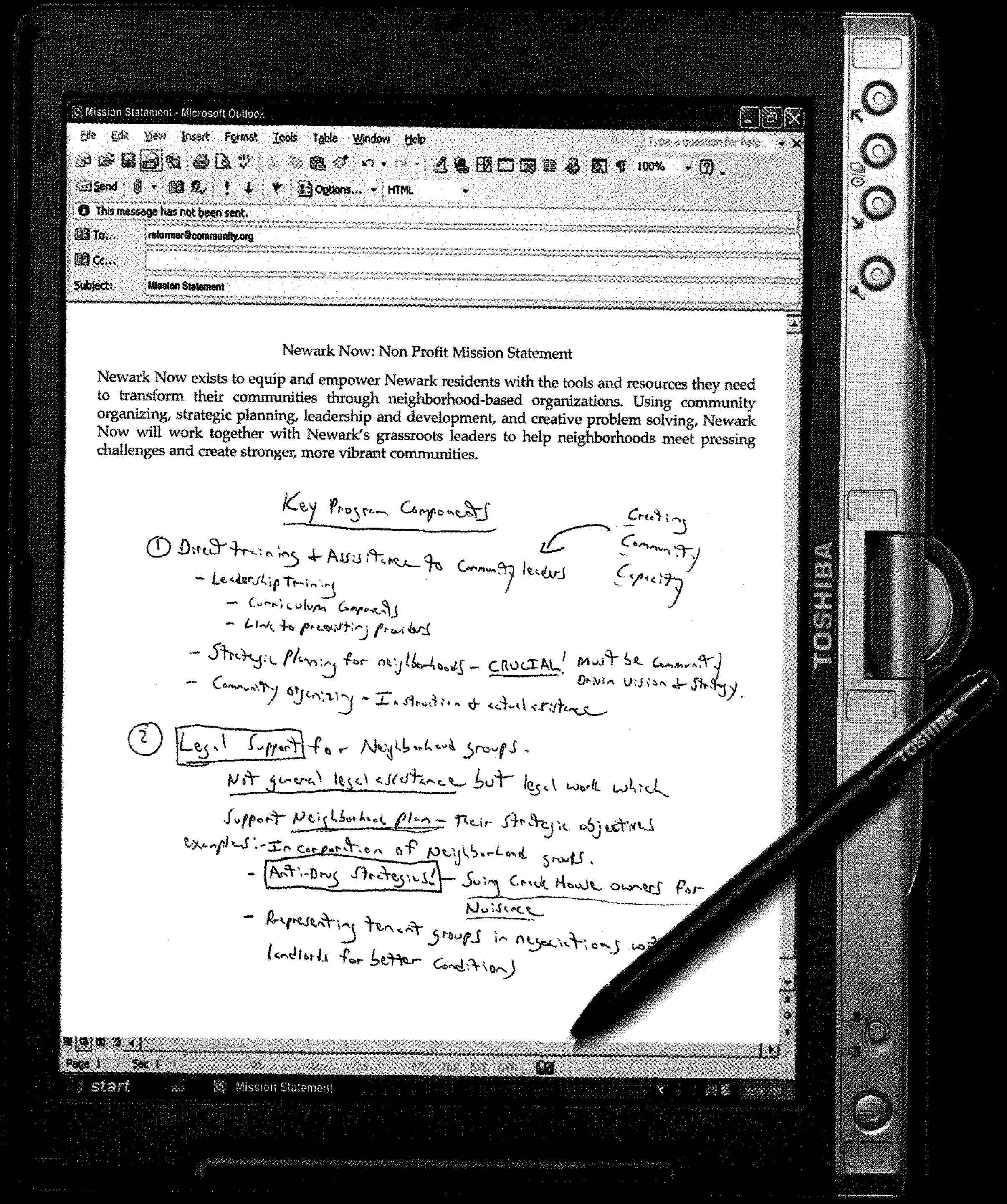

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To... reformer@community.org

Cc...

Subject: Mission Statement

Newark Now: Non Profit Mission Statement

Newark Now exists to equip and empower Newark residents with the tools and resources they need to transform their communities through neighborhood-based organizations. Using community organizing, strategic planning, leadership and development, and creative problem solving, Newark Now will work together with Newark's grassroots leaders to help neighborhoods meet pressing challenges and create stronger, more vibrant communities.

Key Program Components

Creating Community Capacity

① Direct training + Assistance to Community leaders
- Leadership Training
  - Curriculum Components
  - Link to preexisting providers
- Strategic Planning for neighborhoods – CRUCIAL! must be Community Driven vision + Strategy.
- Community organizing – Instruction + actual assistance

② Legal Support for Neighborhood groups.

Not general legal assistance but legal work which Support Neighborhood plan – their Strategic objectives

examples: - Incorporation of Neighborhood groups.
  - Anti-Drug Strategies! – Suing Crack House owners for Nuisance
  - Representing tenant groups in negotiations w landlords for better Conditions

Page 1 Sec 1

In the hands of Cory Booker.
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“‘What’s this “Stick around for Frank?”’ Brad says, ‘I was *kidding.*’ Jilly points his finger and says, ‘None of that “Stick around for Frank.”’”

Irrera smiled and drank his wine. The farewell tour had gone well, he acknowledged, except for a small misunderstanding in Dayton, Ohio. “A couple of girls were screaming, ‘Cher, Cher!’” Irrera recalled. “I said, ‘Listen, do you really think she doesn’t know that I’m part of the show? Do you really think I’m going to pick up the curtain and she’s going to start singing for you?’ O.K., maybe I shouldn’t have told them they were the worst crowd I’d ever had with Cher. So I apologize to you, Dayton, Ohio.” Perreault giggled. “But not to that little son-of-a-bitch girl. I hope she—”

“Hey, hey!” Perreault said, whacking him.

“—gets arthritic ankles,” Irrera said. “What? I just wished for a little swelling.” He went on, “No comedian as strong as me can open for Cher anymore. I had a joke about Sophie and how the one thing you don’t want to hear your girlfriend say when you’re watching porn together is ‘Now, that’s a cock!’ Cher thought it was too much. Cher likes you to be great, but she doesn’t want to offend some grandmother, either.” Perreault whacked him again.

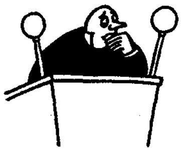
“What?”

The tap on the door came, and Irrera carried his glass of wine down a hallway full of security guards and dancers in bearskin bikinis; past a storage area, twice the size of his dressing room, that was devoted to Cher’s wigs; and, as the lights went down and screams filled the hall, out onto the stage. When it became apparent that the man with the athletic socks wasn’t Cher, the noise died.

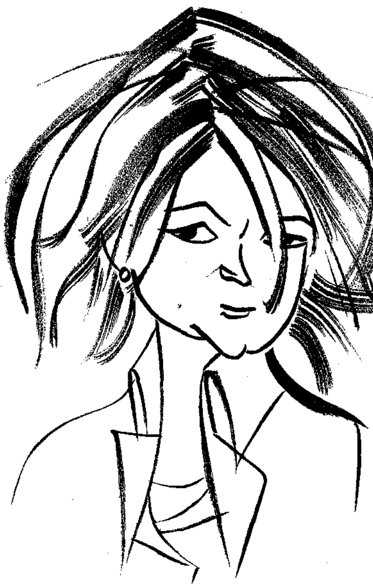
—*Tad Friend*

THE BENCH

AN AGREEABLE WITNESS



Martha Stewart addressed the court just once during the brief hearing in her criminal case which was held last week in downtown Manhattan. Judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum was about to approve what she called a “very leisurely” trial schedule proposed by Richard Strassberg, the lawyer for Stewart’s co-defendant, Peter Bacanovic. Strassberg said there were so many documents to review that he wanted the trial put off until January 12, 2004—more than seven months after the indictment and three years after Stewart’s sale of nearly four thousand shares of ImClone stock, the event that precipitated her prosecution. In keeping with the usual practice, Judge Cedarbaum asked Stewart if she would agree to this schedule. Stewart sighed, rose from her seat, and said, “I agree.”



Martha Stewart

The long wait, which is fairly typical of white-collar cases, means that uncertainty will continue to cloud Stewart’s personal and professional life well into next year. But there is another reason that the delay may weigh heavily on her. After her indictment, Stewart resigned as the C.E.O. of her company, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, but she remains its principal visionary, in the newly created position of chief creative officer, and she will continue to work with the same personal assistant, Ann Armstrong, that she has had for the past five years. As the trial date approaches, this could get a little awkward, because Armstrong may turn out to be the principal witness against her.

By now, the tale is well known: Stewart sold her shares of ImClone the day before a negative report from the Food and Drug Administration drove down the value of the stock. The government did not charge Stewart with criminal insider trading, which was the original focus of the investigation, but, rather, with crimes relating to obstruction of justice—that is, with lying about her reasons for making the sale. According to the indictment, the F.B.I. and the U.S. Attorney’s Office contacted Stewart about her trade on January 25, 2002, and scheduled an interview with her for February 4, 2002. About four days before the interview, according to people familiar with the case, Stewart pulled up a chair at Armstrong’s desk and began examining the computer records of her telephone messages.

On the day of the trade, while Stewart was travelling by private plane to Mexico, Armstrong had taken the following message from Stewart’s stockbroker (and now co-defendant): “Peter Bacanovic thinks ImClone is going to start trading downward.” Now, sitting at Armstrong’s keyboard, with Armstrong nearby, Stewart apparently deleted the original message and typed in a substitute: “Peter Bacanovic re imclone.” Then she had second thoughts. According to the indictment, “after altering the message, Stewart directed her assistant to return the message to its original wording.” Stewart’s team has more or less confirmed this version of events.

Armstrong’s account of her boss’s fiddling with the phone messages will surely be a dramatic high point of the trial. The image is striking—the celebrity C.E.O. hunched over her secretary’s desk, literally rewriting history and then, evidently, thinking better of it. The legal significance of these actions will undoubtedly be closely contested. Prosecutors will argue that they reveal a guilty conscience about the ImClone sale. In her interview with the authorities on February 4th, according to the indictment, “Stewart stated she did not know” whether Bacanovic’s phone message was reflected in Armstrong’s log. Prosecutors will maintain, of course, that Stewart’s alteration of that message shows that she did know. The defense will contend that Stewart may temporarily have panicked but that, ultimately, she deceived no one. Because there is no verbatim transcript of the February 4th interview, the defense may well argue that the investigators misinterpreted what Stewart told them that day.

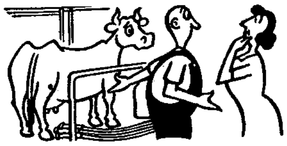
In any event, Stewart and Armstrong now have many months in which to contemplate facing each other in court. Stewart is notorious in some circles for being tough on subordinates, but Armstrong has apparently thrived as her assistant. According to people who know her, Armstrong is fiftyish, lives on the Upper East Side, and has worked happily for Stewart since 1998. As one of her associates said last week, "Why should she lose her job for telling the truth?"

Stewart, for her part, did not so much attend as preside over the hearing. When she walked in, the courtroom grew hushed, in the way that it usually does when the Judge arrives. Stewart wore muted earth tones, which matched her polka-dot umbrella. As she settles into life as a defendant, she seems to be playing with her reputation as a rather fearsome control freak. She made a much reported quip to a courtroom artist, insisting that she be portrayed with "no pockmarks. Perfect skin." But the real Stewart may have come through in her interaction with her co-defendant. Bacanovic and his team hustled in late, and Stewart stared hard at him, clearly trying to get his attention. Bacanovic ignored her for the duration of the hearing. When the court session ended, Stewart kept it up, finally walking over and chatting with him for a minute or two. As Bacanovic learned—and as the government may also learn—Stewart tends to get what she wants.

—*Jeffrey Toobin*

DEPT. OF PROCUREMENT

THE MEAT DOCTOR



Most weekdays, Sol Forman ate both lunch and dinner at the legendary steakhouse Peter Luger, which was situated across the street from a metalworking factory he owned, in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. In 1950, the restaurant's owners put the place up for auction, and Forman—afraid that his principal source of nutrition was about to disappear—submitted what turned out to be the only bid. Initially, looking after his factory prevented him from devoting as much time to the restaurant as he would have liked, so the task of procuring well-marbled protein fell to his wife, Marsha. She hired a retired government grader to tutor her, discovered that she had a talent for judging beef, and became a beloved figure in Manhattan's wholesale meat district, where she was invariably the only buyer wearing pearls and a fur hat.

Marsha Forman died five years ago; her husband—whose high-cholesterol diet may have hastened his demise—died three years later, at the age of ninety-eight. Today, the restaurant is run by the Formans' daughter Marilyn Forman Spiera, with help from her sister, Amy Forman Rubenstein, and her daughter Jody Spiera Storch. Marsha Forman taught her daughters and her granddaughter how to evaluate meat, and the three women now do all the restaurant's buying. Each week, they visit half a dozen suppliers, mostly in lower Manhattan and at Hunts Point, and select roughly twenty thousand pounds of prime beef, plus the odd quarter-ton of lamb.

On a recent morning, the shopping rotation fell to Storch, who is pretty, exuberant, and thirty-two years old. Shortly before ten o'clock, she parked her minivan in front of Walmir Meat, Inc., on Washington Street near West Fourteenth Street. She opened the car's sliding side door, revealing a child's safety seat—she and her husband, a hedge-fund manager, have a three-year-old daughter and a six-year-old son—and a white butcher's coat. She pulled the butcher's coat over her mom clothes, and put on a pair of white loose-knit meat-handling gloves.

"My grandmother took me to the market the first time when I was eight," she said. "The whole thing overwhelmed me, and I became a vegetarian, which was an abhorrent thing to be in my family. 'You can't be a vegetarian!' So that lasted about a month—and now here I am. My brother, my sister, and my dad are all physicians. They call me the M.D. of the family—the Meat Doctor."

Inside Walmir Meat, Storch greeted several employees by name, then made her way toward the back, where a small number of especially promising quartered cattle carcasses, all of them stamped "prime" by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, had been set aside for her consideration. The porterhouse, which Peter Luger features, originates in the short loin, a foot-and-a-half-long section that begins below the bottom of a steer's rib cage. When Storch found a short loin she liked—"This one is nice and fat, and fat is flavor"—she claimed it for the restaurant by whacking it with a long-handled, dye-coated brass stamp, which she inherited from her grandmother.

"Sometimes, to fool you, suppliers do what's called 'combing' beef," she said as she worked her way down the line. "They take a knife and scrape it over the surface, over and over, pulling the fat out so that the beef looks better than it is."

Like her mother, her aunt, and her sister, Storch went to Barnard College. She was admitted to law school after graduation, but she wasn't sure she really wanted to be a lawyer, and she deferred twice. While she was making up her mind, the family business seduced her. "My mother started at the restaurant when she was very young, and she was going to N.Y.U. law school at night, and she was pregnant with my sister. She worked right up until my sister was born, and she worked through all her pregnancies—which was very unusual at the time. And when each of us was born she took off just a week. I took two weeks when my son was born—all my friends were getting, like, three months with pay—and my mom said, 'O.K., one week I understand. But why do you need the second one?' "

Peter Luger goes through about six hundred short loins in an average week, and so far Storch had picked out perhaps twenty, each of which would serve between eight and a dozen diners. Now, as she worked her way back toward the front of the building, she said, "In a million years, I never would have guessed I'd be doing this, but I love it. And the part I thought I'd like the least, buying the meat, turned out to be the part I like the most. It's the one thing that, if you do it right, is the essence of the business." She looked closely at another loin. "This one is a little waste-y," she said, "but I like it anyway. I'm going to hit it."

—*David Owen*

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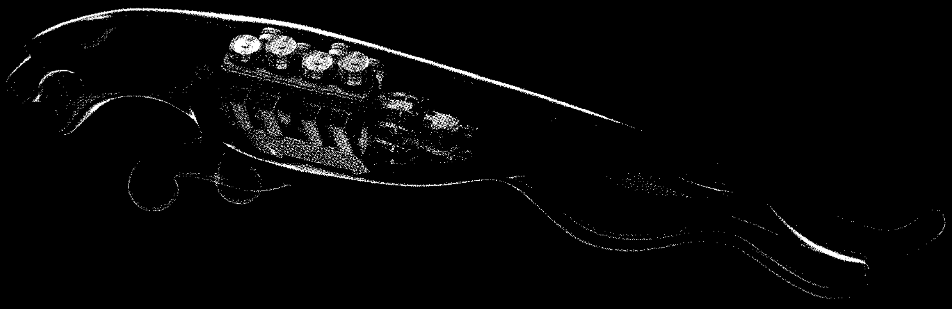

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ANNALS OF JOURNALISM

TUMULT IN THE NEWSROOM

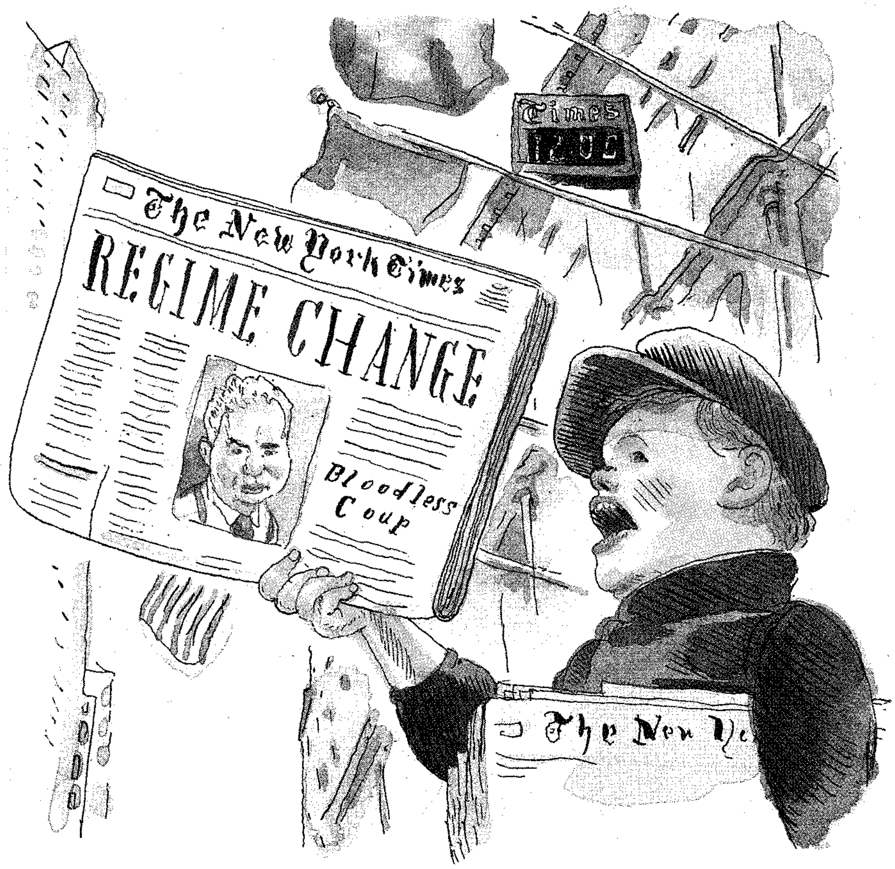
Why chronic insecurity is every Times reporter's lot.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

Not long after I graduated from college, I went to work at the *Times* as a copyboy, or, in more enlightened terms, copy person. The job title was left over from the days of typewriters, when stories were filed on sheaves of carbon paper known as ten-part books, but by the time I got to the newsroom, in the mid-nineteen-eighties, the process had been computerized, and copy persons mostly just answered the phones and sorted the mail. Whenever we could, we shirked these responsibilities to write our own stories, which were usually printed, without a byline, deep inside the Sunday paper. Working at the *Times* in this way was a heady experience—yes, that was my piece on the Hmong folkfest that ran next to the numismatics column—and also a humiliating one. As a group, we copy persons excelled at cataloguing our grievances, collecting gossip, and daydreaming. One colleague—now a television news producer—developed a particularly vivid fantasy of revenge, which he was constantly adjusting to reflect the latest slights, real or imagined. As I recall, it began with his leaping up from his desk, shoving aside various senior editors, pushing his way across the newsroom, and hurdling over the "bullpen." It always ended the same way: with a Bruce Lee kick delivered to the head of the executive editor, Abe Rosenthal.

I hadn't had much reason to think about this fantasy in recent years; then events at the *Times* brought it back in all its cartoonish violence. The paper's travails are, by now, well known, having been chronicled perhaps most extensively by the *Times* itself. In late April, the *Times* discovered that one of its young reporters, Jayson Blair, had, journalistically speaking, gone off the deep end. In a fourteen-thousand-word article that ran as the paper's off-lead, it documented his multifarious sins, which ranged from poor nutrition and fraudulent expense statements to plagiarized quotes, fabricated scenes, and imaginary sources. Not long after that story appeared, the paper reportedly suspended one of its most celebrated writers, Rick Bragg, after a caller raised questions about his work as well; Bragg, the *Times* revealed in an editors' note, had relied almost entirely on the reporting of a freelance journalist to compose a feature about oyster fishermen in Apalachicola, Florida. (Bragg has since resigned from the paper.) Finally, the newspaper's executive editor, Howell Raines, and its managing editor, Gerald M. Boyd, stepped down, and Raines's predecessor, Joseph Lelyveld, was summoned out of retirement to run the paper. The *Times* also played this story as an off-lead, under the headline "TIMES'S 2 TOP EDITORS RESIGN AFTER FUROR ON WRITER'S FRAUD." In the accompanying photograph, the paper's media reporter, Jacques Steinberg, could be seen standing behind the publisher, Arthur O. Sulzberger, Jr., intently taking notes. His description of the editors' departure was a classic of *Times* understatement: "Mr. Raines grabbed a straw hat from the office he had just vacated and walked out of the building. Mr. Boyd followed a minute later. (Neither man responded to requests for interviews.)"

Even at the *Times'* lowest moment, which may be right about now, it is almost impossible to exaggerate the paper's significance. Not only is it bigger and better than its rivals; it enjoys a whole different ontological status. An event it doesn't cover might, in a manner of speaking, just as well not have happened. At the same time, the *Times* is a place where people show up to work, which is to say also to whine, conspire, feud, and slack off. (When I left the paper, after fourteen years, I found that, no longer consumed by *Times* gossip, I had added an extra hour to my day.) The mechanics of the paper's production and its eminence as an institution have always been in tension, and part of what made the *Times* the



Jayson Blair's frauds put the Times' inner dramas on its own front page.

BARRY BLITT

Times was its ability to repress this. In this sense, Blair's bogus stories were almost less damaging than the accurate ones that followed: here was all the *Times'* institutional stature and gravity of tone being brought to bear on its own screw-ups. And, once the *Times* picked up the story, it had to see it to the end. Woe to the editor whose newsroom becomes the news.

One of the best accounts of life inside the *Times* comes from a historian of the French Revolution, Robert Darnton. (Darnton, now a professor at Princeton University, is a member of a *Times* family: his father, Byron, was killed in the Second World War while on assignment for the paper; his younger brother, John, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting out of Poland, is now an associate editor at the *Times;* and Darnton himself briefly worked in the newsroom in the mid-nineteen-sixties.) Darnton's article "Writing News and Telling Stories" appeared twenty-eight years ago in *Daedalus*, ostensibly in response to an academic study of the media. Whatever its contribution may have been to the field of communications theory, it was so astute about *Times* affairs that it was passed around among reporters as a kind of in-house Masters and Johnson. Somebody gave me a smudgy Xerox when I started out at the paper, and for years I kept it in my desk, under a pile of notebooks.

The *Times* that Darnton describes is a rigidly hierarchical, almost neurotically status-conscious place. The star reporters, like Homer Bigart and Peter Kihss, occupy the front of the newsroom. The young reporters—the "greenhorns"—are banished to the back. In between sit the rewrite men and the middle-aged veterans, who include, among others, "foreign correspondents who have been sent home to pasture" and "bitter, ambitious men who have failed to get editorships." Darnton relates how reporters would be summoned over the newsroom's public-address system to the city desk for assignments, and the terror this could induce. To avoid an editor's "hungry eye," grown men were known to resort to hiding in the bathroom or behind the water fountains.

At one point, Darnton imagines a reporter named Jones approaching the desk: "Jones can feel his colleagues thinking as he walks past them, 'I hope he gets a lousy assignment or that he gets a good one and blows it.'" At another point, Jones is dispatched to cover a meeting in Brooklyn. When his story on the event, a mere two hundred words long, gets poor play, he is depressed, especially as Smith, who sits next to him, "made the second front with a colorful story about garbage dumping." To those who read it, the *Times* may be a record of wars, famines, and Broadway openings; to those who write it, Darnton observes, it is just another reminder of who is getting ahead and who isn't.

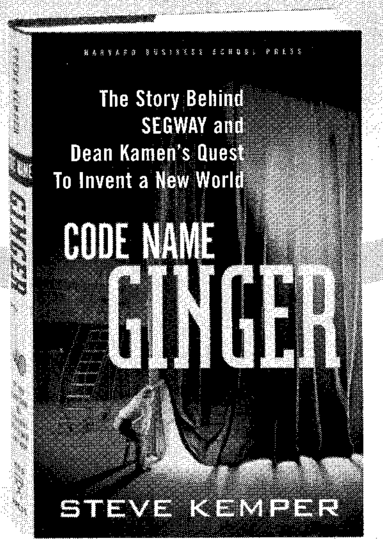
This kind of anxiety is institutionally useful, which is one of the reasons it persists. " 'Did you see how Smith handled that garbage story?' the city editor will say to Jones. 'That's the kind of work we need from the man who is going to fill the next opening in the Chicago bureau.' " But, if it is tempting for editors to manipulate reporters in this way, it is not without risk. The newsroom's very competitiveness can, paradoxically, inspire a subversive sort of solidarity:

> Chronic insecurity breeds resentment. While scrambling over one another for the approval of the editors, the reporters develop great hostility to the men at the other end of the room. . . . The reporters feel united by a sentiment of "them" against "us," which they express in horseplay and house jokes. (I remember a clandestine meeting in the men's room, where one reporter gave a parody of urinating techniques among "them.")

By my day, Bigart and Kihss were gone, the seating plan had mostly broken down, and the public-address system had been replaced by multiline telephones. But, aside from these details, life at the *Times* was basically the same. My colleagues and I worried endlessly over our positions in the hierarchy and had worked out to several decimal places which assignments were to be coveted, based not on their intrinsic merits but on their status. (City Hall was better than Police Headquarters, Police Headquarters was better than the Brooklyn courthouse, the Brooklyn courthouse was better than Trenton, and anything was better than Long Island.) We rushed to get the early edition of the paper as soon as it appeared on Manhattan newsstands, which in those days was around 11 P.M. The pleasure of a really great story was usually mixed with envy, while the pleasure of a really awful one was pure and uncomplicated.

At the same time, we were a community, bound in no small part by the count-

THE TRUTH IS BETTER THAN THE HYPE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less stories that would never—could never—make it into the paper. (A favorite concerned an Arabic phrase that the *Times*, relying on a clerk who happened to be Muslim, had rendered "There is no god but Allah" but which actually meant "National Bank of Kuwait.") Gathering at a restaurant—now defunct—called the Hawaii Kai, first as copy persons and later as reporters, we inevitably came to the conclusion that, in our sleep, we could run the paper better than our bosses. A game I remember with particular fondness was called Most Fucked Over: the winner was the one who, as the name suggests, could recount the day's best example of editorial imbecility—the lead mangled beyond recognition, the story assigned at nine hundred words, then cut to a news brief. After one Metro editor we especially disliked was pushed out, someone pencilled in his name on a list of history's greatest disasters that was posted by the rewrite desk. It remained there until the newsroom was renovated, a decade later.

Just after the revelation of Jayson Blair's transgressions, Sulzberger, Raines, and Boyd held what the *Times* referred to as a "town-hall-style" meeting with their staff. To accommodate everyone who wanted to attend, the session was held in a rented movie theatre on West Forty-fourth Street, and it was also piped in, via telephone, to the paper's many, far-flung bureaus. The *Times* closed the meeting to news coverage—a throng of reporters stood in front of the theatre's entrance—and, in a somewhat convoluted effort at high-mindedness, barred its own media reporter as well, forcing him, in effect, to rely on leaks from his colleagues.

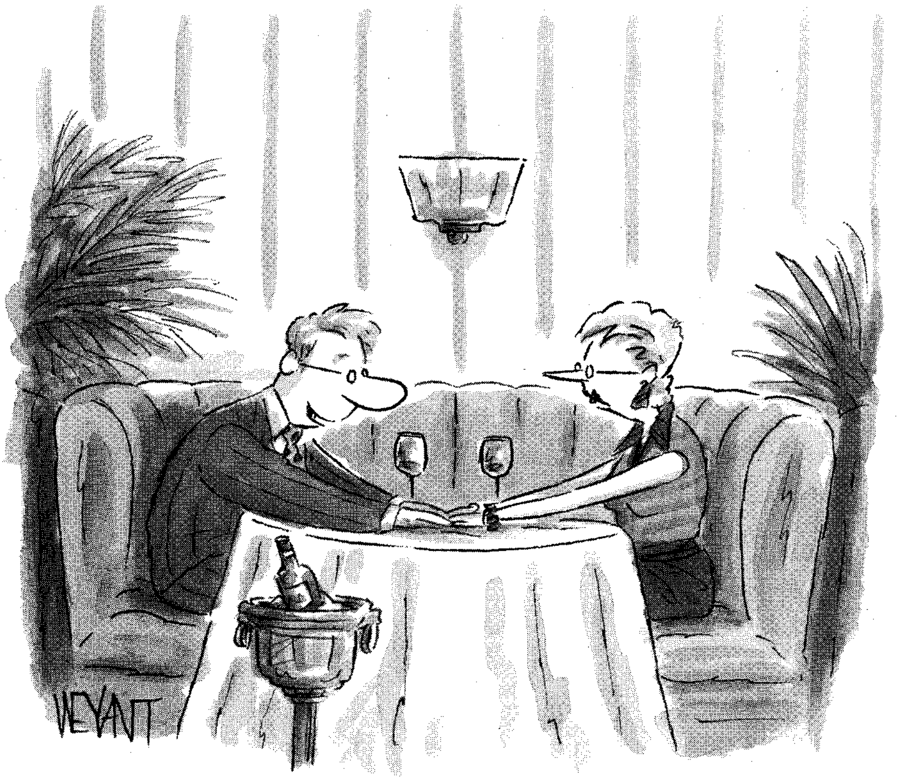
One after another, reporters rose to dress down their bosses. "I do not feel a sense of trust and reassurance that judgments are properly made," Joseph Sexton, a deputy editor on the Metro desk, announced in front of several hundred *Times* employees. Shaila K. Dewan, a Metro reporter, demanded, "What will you do to restore our faith that there is a modicum of fairness in the advancement process?" Alex Berenson, a reporter for the Business desk, asked Raines point-blank if he had considered resigning.

During the years I worked at the *Times*, there were three different executive editors. Abe Rosenthal retired shortly after I got to the paper, and was replaced by Max Frankel, who served until 1994, when he was succeeded by Lelyveld. In that time, I'm sure there were some editors and reporters who felt that they were being well treated and their talents properly recognized; however, they were careful not to admit it. The level of disaffection in the newsroom may even, at moments, have approached that of the past few months, but the resentment never had much in the way of coherence. In narrative terms, it lacked a theme, or, to use *Times* shorthand, a "nut graf."

Though neither Frankel nor Lelyveld could be described as easygoing, both men tended, as executive editor, to underplay the part. They would often act, and perhaps genuinely were, unaware of the extent of their power. I don't recall either of them ever articulating an overarching goal for the paper. The implication was that their own sensibility didn't matter; they were there to run the *Times*. This neutral posture was, of course, the posture of the paper itself.

Raines, who became the executive editor on September 5, 2001, showed no interest in this sort of studied self-effacement. He often invoked Bear Bryant as a model leader; in an interview for this magazine last year he told Ken Auletta, "When Coach Bryant walked onto a football field, everybody in that stadium knew that football would be played here today." He was, without a doubt, the only *Times* man to show up at work in a white Panama hat.

Throughout his tenure, Raines sent out *Times*-wide e-mails addressed "Dear Friends and Colleagues." Typically, they included expressions of praise—often extravagant—for the work of the previous weeks. "You have managed to make every page of the newspaper a richer, deeper read and a more gratifying visual treat day after day," one from last year went. "The intellectual depth and professional quality of the journalism in our paper, on the Web and in our expanding television and book operations has no peer anywhere in the world." The terms of Raines's praise were, as a rule, both triumphalist and agonistic: Sports "spotted the ice judging story early and dominated it all week"; the Business staff and the Washington bureau "continued to dominate the Enron story as they have all winter." When, in April, 2002, the *Times* won an unprecedented seven Pulitzer Prizes, mostly for its coverage of the World Trade Center attacks, Raines declared that the paper's reporting on 9/11 would "be studied and taught as long as journalism is studied and practiced."



"Susan, this might be just the wine talking, but I think I want to order more wine."

EVENING CONCERT, SAINTE-CHAPELLE

The celebrated windows flamed with light
directly pouring north across the Seine;
we rustled into place. Then violins
vaunting Vivaldi's strident strength, then Brahms,
seemed to suck with their passionate sweetness,
bit by bit, the vigor from the red,
the blazing blue, so that the listening eye
saw suddenly the thick black lines, in shapes
of shield and cross and strut and brace, that held
the holy glowing fantasy together.
The music surged; the glow became a milk,
a whisper to the eye, a glimmer ebbed
until our beating hearts, our violins
were cased in thin but solid sheets of lead.

—*John Updike*

Raines had a very public goal for the *Times*, which was, as he repeatedly put it, to raise the paper's "competitive metabolism." What the practical import of this metaphor was depends on whom you ask. During Raines's tenure, several high-level editors who had been moving steadily up the ranks found themselves sidelined. Similarly, several veteran reporters who had expected to be able to negotiate their next assignments were told, rather summarily, that this would not be happening. (A number of them left the paper.) Meanwhile, a new élite of writers and editors emerged. Some were people who had distinguished themselves in the aftermath of September 11th; some were known as stylish, or at least flashy, writers; some were aggressive risk-takers; and some, it appeared, were just people Raines could push around. The net effect was to centralize authority, which one has to assume was deliberate on Raines's part, and to create widespread resentment, which one has to assume was not. Reporters in the Washington bureau took to calling the masthead editors the Taliban and Raines Mullah Omar.

Most of the newsroom's grievances never got much beyond the *Times*. Usually, they centered on some example of editorial heavy-handedness—an article ordered up to fit a preconception, a lead dictated from on high. In one case, Raines, or one of his deputies, interfered so insistently—and wrongheadedly—with a piece on the State of the Union address that the front page had to be reset at the very last minute to repair the damage. (The incident left a top editor at the paper in tears.) During the controversy last fall over the Augusta National Golf Club's refusal to admit women, Raines killed two columns on the subject, one by Dave Anderson and one by Harvey Araton. Both columns appeared to question the significance of the controversy, which the *Times* had devoted thirty-three stories to. It is almost unheard of at the *Times* for a column—even one that runs in the news pages—to be spiked, and eventually Raines reversed himself, but not before news of his decision had leaked out and became a minor scandal. Raines defended his actions, saying that they had been based not on ideology but solely on the quality of the columns, a claim that almost no one took seriously. In what turned out to be a preview of things to come, the *Times* felt compelled to report on the whole embarrassing incident in its own pages, in an article headlined "2 REJECTED SPORTS COLUMNS TO BE PRINTED BY THE TIMES."

Raines was clearly aware of the growing discontent in the newsroom. "I know that inaccurate reports have stirred anxieties among some of you about how people will be treated as we pursue this energetic vision," he noted in a "Dear Friends and Colleagues" e-mail dated February 15, 2002. But even his efforts at mollification could be read as an admonition. This same e-mail stated, "As we move forward, we will be doing so as a team, and we are determined to leave no one behind who wants to participate in the *Times's* kind of journalism."

In "The Kingdom and the Power," Gay Talese, himself a former *Times* man, recounts what was, at least until Blair, the paper's classic story of youthful indiscretion. The tale's hero, as it were, is Clyde Haberman, who now writes a column for the Metro section. In June, 1966, Haberman was the City College stringer, and had the unenviable task of transcribing for the *Times* the names of the winners of the hundreds of awards that the college was bestowing at commencement. Apparently out of boredom, he added a prize of his own, the Brett Award, "to the student who has worked hardest under a great handicap—Jake Barnes." When Abe Rosenthal found out about the joke—an allusion to the tragically disadvantaged narrator of "The Sun Also Rises"—he called Haberman, who had been a favorite of his, into his office. "Sit down," he is reported to have said. "You will never be able to write for this newspaper again." (It took more than a decade for Rosenthal to relent.)

Somehow, in my early years in the newsroom, I missed this story, or, more likely, I heard it but failed to take it to heart. In 1986, I got my first big assignment as a probationary reporter—to follow Bishop Desmond Tutu on a cross-country tour. By the fourth or fifth newsless day, I decided to amuse myself with an obvious—and therefore, I thought, harmless—parody. As I recall, it was datelined Hartford, Connecticut, and began with something witty like "Today Bishop Desmond Tutu and his wife had breakfast in their hotel room here." Shortly after I filed it, I received a call from the Metro desk's weekend editor, informing me that he was doing his best to get the story killed out of the *Times'* computer system. He suggested that if I was attached to my job I had better hope that he succeeded. The tone of his voice—anger mixed with panic—was instructive, and I was never tempted to try anything like that again.

Blair was hired by the *Times* in the summer of 1999, right after finishing, or, as it turns out, not quite finishing, college. In his first two years at the paper, he racked up some fifty corrections. "An article on Saturday about a Long Island man who killed his wife, Elsa Rolan, misstated the way she died," a correction dated January 25, 2000, read. "She was strangled, not shot." He was admonished—in an evaluation in January, 2002, the Metro editor, Jonathan Landman, warned Blair that his correction rate was "extraordinarily high by the standards of the paper"—but he never seems to have really got the message. Nor, apparently, did the *Times*.

A few months after Landman submitted his negative evaluation, he sent a note to newsroom administrators saying, "We have to stop Jayson from writing for the *Times*. Right now." Instead of being terminated, though, Blair was placed in a sort of journalistic rehab program designed specially for him, and then, in October, sent off to Washington as part of the team covering the sniper shootings. Soon after arriving there, he produced a front-page exclusive, relying entirely on unnamed sources. Raines sent Blair a note congratulating him on his work, which he called "great shoe-leather reporting." A few weeks later, Blair produced another front-page story on the sniper case, once again relying on anonymous sources.

Over the next several months, Blair was supposedly in constant motion, filing stories from twenty cities in six different states. At one point, he was sent to Hunt Valley, Maryland, to interview a couple awaiting news of their son, a marine stationed in Iraq. He updated his editors on the progress of the interview via e-mail. "I am giving them a breather for about 30 minutes," he wrote in a message to the national editor, Jim Roberts. "It's amazing timing. Lots of wrenching ups and downs with all the reports of casualties." Blair, the paper later discovered, never met the couple. Indeed, the entire time that he was claiming to be on the road, it seems, he was sitting in Brooklyn, doing his reporting, such as it was, from his apartment. Not surprisingly, many of the pieces he composed this way contained grievous errors. In perhaps his most celebrated invention—a feature about Private Jessica Lynch's family datelined Palestine, West Virginia—Blair placed the family's home on top of a hill and described Lynch's father, Gregory, choking up "as he stood on his porch here overlooking the tobacco fields and cattle pastures." The Lynch home actually sits in a wooded valley.

When the *Times* finally went looking for evidence of Blair's malfeasance, it found it everywhere, and certainly in retrospect it seems incredible that his deceptions should have continued for so long. Key details of Blair's first front-page piece on the sniper shootings had been challenged by senior law-enforcement officials; after the second, a prosecutor involved in the case held a news conference to denounce the story. Yet no one at the *Times* ever seems to have asked Blair to identify his sources. In five months of near-constant travel, he never filed a single receipt for a hotel room, or a rental car, or an airplane ticket, yet no one seems ever to have taken note of this.

Still, to read Blair's story as a failure of supervision is to misunderstand the nature of the problem. The *Times* doesn't check up on its reporters—it is taken for granted that they will get things right. Daily journalism, for many practical reasons, depends on this sort of trust; that's why the Brett Award cost a favored young reporter his job. The problem in Blair's case is that the *Times* bent its rules to keep him on—an indulgence that by its own logic was bound to end badly, though just how badly no one could have predicted.

After the *Times* confronted Blair, he dropped out of view, and there was some fear that he might harm himself. Instead, he produced a book proposal. "I really screwed up" was its opening line. In the proposal, which was quickly faxed around to half the journalists in New York, Blair, who is African-American, cast himself on the one hand as a black urban professional Everyman and on the other as a sort of latter-day Nat Turner. "I want to offer my experience as a lesson, for the precipice from which I plunged is one on which many young, ambitious, well-educated and accomplished African Americans and other 'minorities' teeter," he wrote. His story, he continued, would be "about a young black man who was told he could not succeed by everyone from his white second-grade teacher to his editor at the *Times*, who rose from the fields and got a place in the master's house, and then burned it down the only way he knew how."

In the great rehashing of Blair's story, many commentators quite reasonably focussed on race. Howard Kurtz, the Washington *Post's* media critic, for example, speculated on CNN that the *Times* tolerated an error rate like Blair's only because he was a young, promising African-American: "I wonder if a middle-aged hack would have gotten away with fifty mistakes and still be at that job." As many noted, Raines was especially concerned about diversity: he had written a book about the civil-rights movement, had won a Pulitzer Prize for an essay on his debt to his black nanny, and, in choosing Gerald Boyd as his second-in-command, had appointed the *Times'* first African-American managing editor. Initially, Raines denied that Blair's race had mattered. Responding to Kurtz, he told the *Observer*, "If someone wants to have some unbecoming speculation on their television show, that's their prerogative. We have a diverse staff, and we manage them in a very evenhanded way." Later, speaking to his own staff, he took a different position: "You have a right to ask if I, as a white man from Alabama, with those convictions, gave him one chance too many by not stopping his appointment to the sniper team. When I look into my heart for the truth of that, the answer is yes."

If Blair had been an isolated problem, Raines's suggestion that he had been misled by his own best impulses might have won him a sympathetic hearing. Conversely, had there been no Blair it's possible that *Times* staff members ultimately would have adjusted to Raines's overbearing style. But the two came together, and, in the end, it was the coincidence that seemed to lend the matter its moral clarity.

By pushing the newsroom to be faster and more aggressive, by demanding that stories be "dominated" instead of just reported, Raines had defined himself—or, what amounts to much the same thing, had allowed himself to be defined—against the traditions of the institution. Even his favorite formula—raising the "competitive metabolism"—could be read as a version of the old critique of the *Times* as slow and fustian. In this way, the everyday grievances of the newsroom acquired the force of principle. What Raines was doing wasn't just making a lot of people miserable; it was undermining the *Times'* highest values. Blair, with his fraudulent exclusives and his spurious hustle, was spectacular confirmation of Raines's mistake. Or, at least, he was close enough. ♦

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Profiles in Commerce

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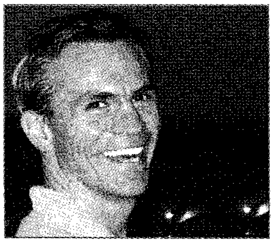

Seymour Segnit, president

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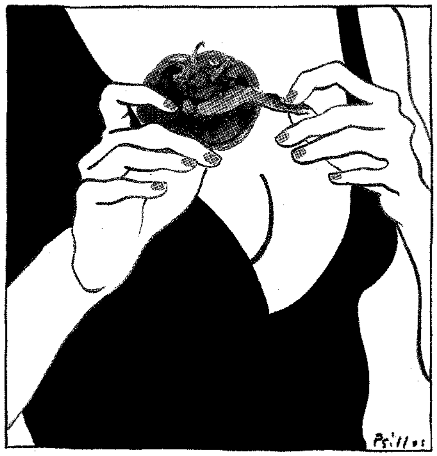
SHOUTS & MURMURS

SUMMER RECIPES

BY HENRY ALFORD



> Seasonal cooking is anyway better suited to those who live in sunnier climates. The rest of us need to make the most of what warmth is offered, and much of the time this has to emanate from the kitchen rather than from the skies outside. Summer, then, is an idea, a memory, a hopeful projection.
>
> —*Nigella Lawson, "Forever Summer."*

Sun-Dried Tomatoes

8 tomatoes
6 c. olive oil

Unscrew a 100-watt light bulb while it is still gorgeously warm. With a rubbing motion, thrill the skins of the tomatoes until they start to pucker and tumesce. Uncork the oil; drizzle onto tomatoes until lubricious.

Skinny-Dipping at Dusk

8 c. water
25 lbs. cocoa

Store the water in a cool place, allowing it to bio-ripen for a period lasting months or even years. Meanwhile, fill your largest roasting pan with cocoa. Roll in cocoa.

Gone Fishin'

1 telephone
1 couch

Unplug the telephone and assume a position on your couch which suggests an odalisque or any late-career Ingres portrait. Should people or problems present themselves, bite into a nougatty chocolate and say teasingly, "I can't help you. I'm very Ingres-y with you." Let the slipcovers puddle around you like a light vinaigrette.

Summery Chinese Toboggan Salad

1 can bamboo shoots
1/2 c. sesame oil
4 stalks celery, chopped
Juice and zest of 3 lemons
1 wooden toboggan

Put the toboggan in a food processor and pulse for ten seconds on Eviscerate. Remove the splinters from the processor and toss with other ingredients. Arrange on a plate with your bare hands, letting your fingers burrow into the mixture as they do when encountering the rich loam of the earth. Strike your gong.

August Romance

2 c. high-quality vinegar
10 toffee caramels

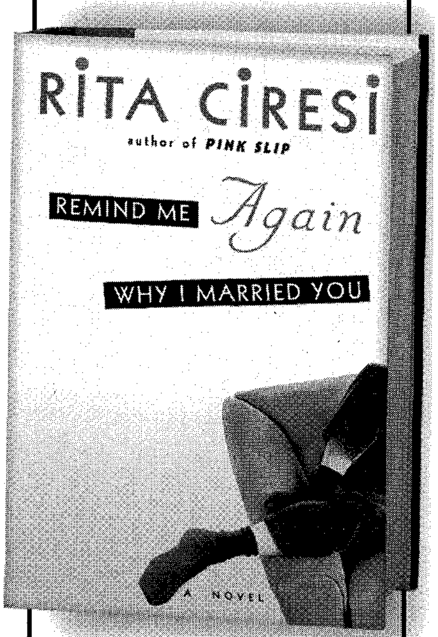
Unsheath the caramels laughingly, unconcerned of outcome. Fork-prick to soften. Using the soft pads of your thumb and index finger to palpate the caramels, tease them into the vinegar, saying, "Mummy knows what's best." Put the whole concoction away someplace dark. Have a glass of Prosecco with a friend, displaying blitheness and a tendency, when food has been dropped on the floor, to plop it back onto your plate with a soulful, sensuous expression.

Can you leave the vinegar alone for between three days and three weeks? Try to, darling—what you're doing here is tempering yourself as well as the candy. Enjoy this. Because when you return to the vinegar the caramels will be gone. ♦

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

RITA CIRESI

"is Jane Austen
in New York
at the end of the
20th century."*



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CRAWLING WITH TROUBLE

Would you mortgage your house to grow millions of red worms?

BY MARK SINGER

WELEETKA, OKLAHOMA

One thing that attracted Gary Williams to worm farming was the prospect of watching his investment literally grow—as opposed to the stock market, where, he'd discovered, money had a way of disappearing before you had a chance to get friendly with it. In the fall of 2000, Williams retired from Southwestern Bell, where he'd put in thirty-one years as a telephone technician. He was fifty-three years old and eager to maximize the hours he spent fishing on a lake not far from his home, in Weleetka, in eastern Oklahoma. Offered the choice of collecting his pension in a lump sum or a monthly payout, he opted for the former, immediately parked the money in mutual funds, and about eleven seconds later noticed that more than half of it had vaporized. Time for Plan B.

The notion of worm farming, or vermiculture, as a retirement occupation had first crossed his mind when a phone customer mentioned that he knew some people who'd been doing it at home and making decent money. Williams lived with his wife, Pam, in a house they'd built in the late seventies. It was made of sandstone that had been quarried nearby, and it sat on a forty-acre plot with a front pasture, where they'd grazed a small herd of Charolais cattle before deciding, fifteen years ago, that cows weren't worth the trouble. Across the road was a two-hundred-foot cell-phone tower, something most people would consider an eyesore but which the Williamses envied for the rental income it generated for the property owner. In the wake of his stock-market losses, Williams needed a new revenue source, and he felt encouraged after speaking with a couple of worm growers who lived near Weleetka. Each had signed a contract with a firm called B&B Worm Farms, and they gave it a solid recommendation.

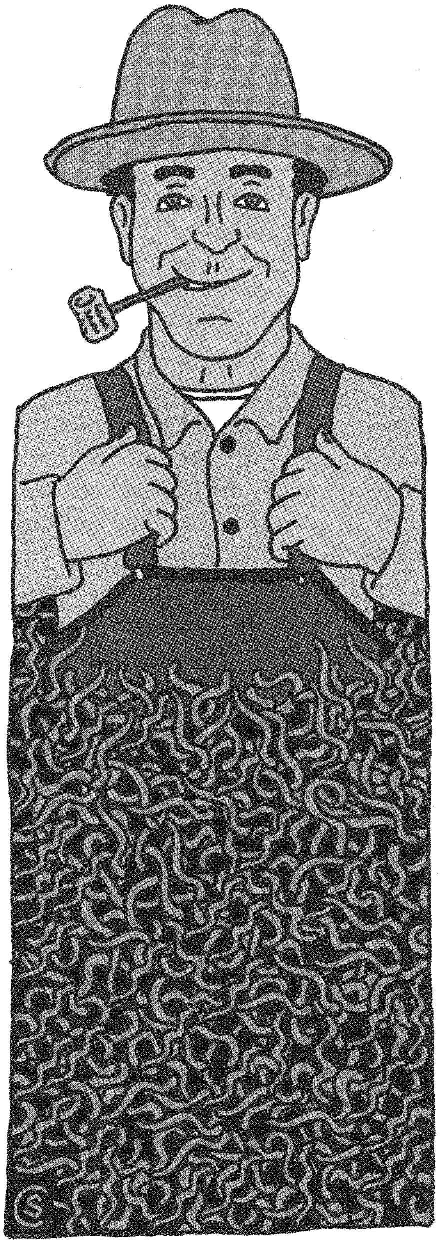
B&B's headquarters were in Meeker, Oklahoma, less than an hour from Weleetka. The company's business plan seemed straightforward. A grower signed a three-year contract with B&B that called for an up-front investment of between three thousand and five thousand dollars, which paid for a hundred pounds of slimy but promising breeding stock (about a hundred thousand worms), technical guidance (via a manual and a toll-free number), and, in most cases, a mechanical worm harvester (which sifted worms from the soil). B&B promised to buy back, for seven dollars a pound, as many mature worms as a grower could produce. The contract also included a first-year, money-cheerfully-refunded guarantee—not that anyone was likely to take advantage of that clause, given everyone's understanding, from the start, that worm farming wasn't a get-rich-quick scheme but a long-term, labor-intensive, yet inevitably rewarding endeavor.

According to the B&B people, the market for adult red worms (a.k.a. *Eisenia fetida*, or red wigglers) was essentially unlimited. Every twenty-four hours, a composting worm could consume its weight in food. And—this was the truly beautiful part—what did worms love to eat? Shit! (Or, specifically, composted livestock manure.) All across America, on small farms, medium-sized farms, and mega-farm agribiz feedlots, cows and hogs and chickens were doing nothing, 24/7, but eating and excreting. Hundreds of millions of tons of bovine manure, swine manure, and poultry manure were relentlessly accumulating, releasing noxious vapors into the air, polluting water supplies, wreaking environmental havoc . . . *unless* you dumped enough red worms on the problem, in which case they'd just eat that smelly mess right up. Better yet, worms, like all God's creatures, pooped regularly, and worm manure, or castings, performed splendidly as an organic fertilizer and soil builder. No wonder B&B's sales pitch boiled down to this: vermiculture could make you prosperous—and it could help save the planet, too. All the company needed was an army of cottage-industry mom-and-pop worm growers.

"Real good, solid, hardworking people" was how another eastern Oklahoma grower I spoke with described B&B's enlistees. For someone like Gary Williams, rural and blue-collar, with an ingrained suspicion of anything that sounded like too good a deal, the fact that vermiculture required getting your hands more than a little dirty—that it amounted to what one literalist worm farmer referred to as "mainly shitwork"—was a reassuring emblem of its fundamental integrity. When you finally got paid for your harvest, the abstract and the tangible neatly converged; the agrarian ideal was rendered tidily functional and profitable. Indeed, cash on the kitchen table was the ultimate evidence that everything at B&B was on the up-and-up.

By the time Williams formally signed on with B&B, in early 2002, the minimum price of a three-year contract had risen to eight thousand dollars. (Later, it escalated to ten thousand, and then to twelve thousand.) Some growers, too bold to start small, loaded up with forty- or fifty- or sixty-thousand-dollar contracts, but Williams wanted to proceed cautiously. Next to his house were two painted tin storage sheds, one for his boat and the other for his tools. Before his worms arrived, he moved the boat out and replaced it with eight wooden boxes; each was four feet by eight feet and a foot deep and was filled with composted horse manure that he'd bought from B&B, which bagged and sold it under the label Grower's Pride. (The main source was a racetrack in Sallisaw, Oklahoma.) Three times a week, he watered the worm beds. To keep the worms warm, he installed a propane heater, and to curb their natural predilection for escaping in the dark he added overhead lighting. Four months later, having begun to feel less cautious, he doubled his capacity, clearing out the toolshed to make room for eight more wooden boxes. Half the worms and bedding material went into the new boxes, and he topped everything off with compost. In September, 2002, he harvested for the first time: two hundred and fifty pounds of *Eisenia fetida*. Because he delivered the worms himself to B&B's Oklahoma distribution center, in Cashion, two hours away, the company paid him an extra dollar a pound. After the two-thousand-dollar check from B&B came in the mail, he and his wife agreed to boost their capacity again.

Last November, Williams added a new building to his property: another tin structure, fifteen hundred square feet, with a concrete floor, drains, propane, fluorescent-light fixtures, and twenty worm boxes. By then, his total investment was up to thirty-seven thousand dollars, twenty thousand of which he'd financed with a home-equity loan. Along the way, he'd acquired a chipper-shredder (red worms thrive on shredded newsprint in their bedding), a cement mixer (for blending a slurry of compost, newsprint, and peat moss), a utility trailer (for toting manure from Sallisaw), and an emergency generator (Weleetka is situated in prime tornado territory). Appalled by his propane bills, Williams also bought a wood-burning stove. Every couple of months, he harvested again, at two hundred pounds a pop, and hauled those worms to Cashion.



According to B&B Worm Farms, the market for red wigglers was unlimited.

SEYMOUR CHWAST

The mechanical harvester, eight feet long and three feet in diameter at its widest point, consisted of two mesh cylinders, one slightly tapered, which were welded together at their bases and mounted horizontally on an aluminum frame. The contents of a worm box would be loaded into the left cylinder and, as the harvester rotated, the castings would sift through. After the remaining material was placed in the right cylinder, where the mesh was of a slightly larger gauge, out would fall baby worms, eggs, and bedding material, all of which would be promptly returned to the box. At the tapered terminus of this cylinder, nothing would remain but mature worms. That the yield represented money didn't mean that the process was necessarily enticing. A clipping I came across from the Wichita *Eagle* quoted a worm-farm hired hand: "Once you see them go across the harvester, you don't want spaghetti no more."

Gary Williams had no such squeamishness, and Pam felt equally upbeat about the enterprise, though there had been a few details that had given them pause. For instance, last summer they attended a growers' seminar in Cashion during which Greg Bradley, the president of B&B, spoke. As they listened to Bradley, it occurred to Pam that this heavyset, goateed, forty-year-old smooth talker seemed "just a little too sweet," and Gary thought he had "the air of a big shot." But wasn't Bradley well on his way to becoming a major big shot? He'd started B&B from scratch in 1998, four years later it was a twenty-five-million-dollar business, and everything he said indicated that things were only going to get better.

"Greg Bradley stood up there and said, 'I need more growers,' " Gary recalled. "He said, 'I have twenty-five contracts in my briefcase that we can't fulfill because we don't have enough worms.' "

When one grower asked Bradley to identify the end users—the giant hog farms, poultry farms, and feedlots to which B&B was selling those millions of ravenous manure-munchers—he replied, "We can't tell you that, because another company might hear about it and underbid us."

That evasiveness bothered the Williamses a bit, but the fact was that B&B had promised to buy all the worms they could produce. Even if six or seven weeks elapsed between delivery and payment, once the check arrived it cleared at the bank. The Williamses saw no reason to worry. If B&B said it needed more worms, they'd gladly grow them.

Greg Bradley's entrée into the world of vermiculture had an altogether different trajectory. In 1998, he and his wife, Lynn, moved from Northern California, where he'd worked as an information-technology officer for a small college, to Meeker, where his mother, stepfather, and half brother lived. Looking for a business opportunity, he spotted a "Grow Worms at Home—Earn $$$!" come-on in a bargain hunters' tabloid. When he dialled the number listed in the ad, the call was answered in Las Vegas, where a squad of salesmen worked the phones in a boiler-room operation. After listening to a high-pressure pitch, Bradley wasn't convinced that he wanted to spend the rest of his life farming worms—but he was convinced that the company had a clever business model. He decided to set up his own worm company, and B&B was born.

Not long ago, when I asked David Desormeau, a Las Vegas accountant who did occasional work for Bradley, to characterize him, he said, "Greg was a we-can-get-this-done type of guy, a we-can-move-this-forward-no-matter-what guy." Just like the Las Vegas company, B&B advertised in *Thrifty Nickel* and similar tabloids; in addition, word of mouth and a Web site got things percolating. But what really made the difference—what enabled B&B, in time, to become the largest earthworm-buyback firm in the country—was Bradley's energy and verbal agility. He was equally nimble one-on-one or in front of a large group, and, whatever the context, he didn't restrict his palaver to the confines of truthfulness. At one point, he told farmers that he would buy not only their worms but their worm castings—under terms that he knew, and the growers later figured out, made no economic sense. "Greg was always ready to promise the world to anybody," Desormeau said. "He'd do anything to make a deal. He was a closer."

Eventually, B&B's network spread across the map—twenty-four hundred contractors in forty-three states—with concentrations in regions where traditional farmers were especially eager to diversify. Scattered across the South, for example, were clusters of anxious tobacco growers who were facing a decline in demand and needed to develop alternative crops. Some had explored raising freshwater shrimp, others had bred alpaca, and now worm farming looked like the ticket. B&B's sales momentum was primarily driven, however, by another, more peculiar urgency. The fact that properly nurtured worm populations expand geometrically meant that, for the company to honor its pledge to buy all the worms its growers harvested, cash flow had to increase at a concomitant rate. B&B had to sell worms faster than they came in the door. This imperative wouldn't have posed such a pressing problem if Bradley had succeeded, you might say, in discovering a humongous manure pile at the end of the rainbow. As it was, his shortcomings as a manager eclipsed his capacities as a deal-closer.

To bolster his legitimacy, Bradley had created an advisory board of directors. One of his more imaginative appointments was of an organic farmer from Washington State named Kelly Slocum, a high-visibility person in vermiculture circles—mainly among Earth First! types who compost their kitchen scraps, maintain worm bins in their basements, and till the castings into their vegetable gardens. Slocum's Left Coast paradigm didn't really fit the B&B model, but Bradley wooed her with documents that convinced her he had made environmentally responsible agreements with industrial end users—a poultry operation in Ohio, a hog farm in Illinois, a composting facility in Iowa, a racetrack in Louisiana. Another deal was in the works, Bradley said, to export large quantities of worms to Sierra Leone, where, as elsewhere in Africa, there was a premium on organic fertilizers that wouldn't leach harmful chemicals into water supplies. Seduced by Bradley's save-the-planet-through-worm-farming vision, Slocum agreed to join the board. A few months into her tenure, however, she became troubled by B&B's potential obligations to its growers, and she urged Bradley to stop selling new contracts. In the summer of 2001, he assented to her request, but she later discovered that he had "blown right through those limitations." Not that Slocum or other board members had real leverage; they didn't receive compensation, nor did they own stock in the company.

A less skeptical B&B recruit—not a board member but a well-chosen piece of window dressing—was Wes Watkins, a ten-term United States congressman from Oklahoma who had met Bradley during an airplane trip to Washington. Watkins was a farm boy with two degrees in agricultural science, and he, too, wanted to save the planet, particularly after travelling to Africa and seeing the consequences of pollution, drought, overpopulation, and starvation. Before leaving office (Watkins didn't seek reelection in 2002), he became a consultant for B&B. One of his responsibilities was to lobby for legislative language that would enable vermiculturists to qualify for government-sponsored agricultural loans. He also had a mandate to connect B&B to prodigious end users—say, Tyson Foods, the poultry processor. Another target on Bradley's wish list was Wal-Mart, which he imagined as an outlet for worm castings and Grower's Pride manure.

It turned out that not only was horse shit the main thing, besides worms, that B&B had to offer in the marketplace; it was, figuratively speaking, what Bradley had been peddling for a long while. (Precisely how long remains a debatable question.) Kelly Slocum says she realized during the summer of 2002 that the touted industrial end users—the big deals in Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, and Sierra Leone—were phantasms. In each case, *something* had been there: amorphous infrastructures, props for photo ops, economic-development incentive grants predicated upon unfulfilled contingencies. Yet in each case, beneath the bluster and the betting-on-the-come, there was no substance. Bradley had been unable to hustle any customers for his worms; the demand simply wasn't there. Ultimately, the only actual purchasers of worms harvested by B&B growers were . . . new B&B growers. B&B, in other words, bore the earmarks of a Ponzi scheme.

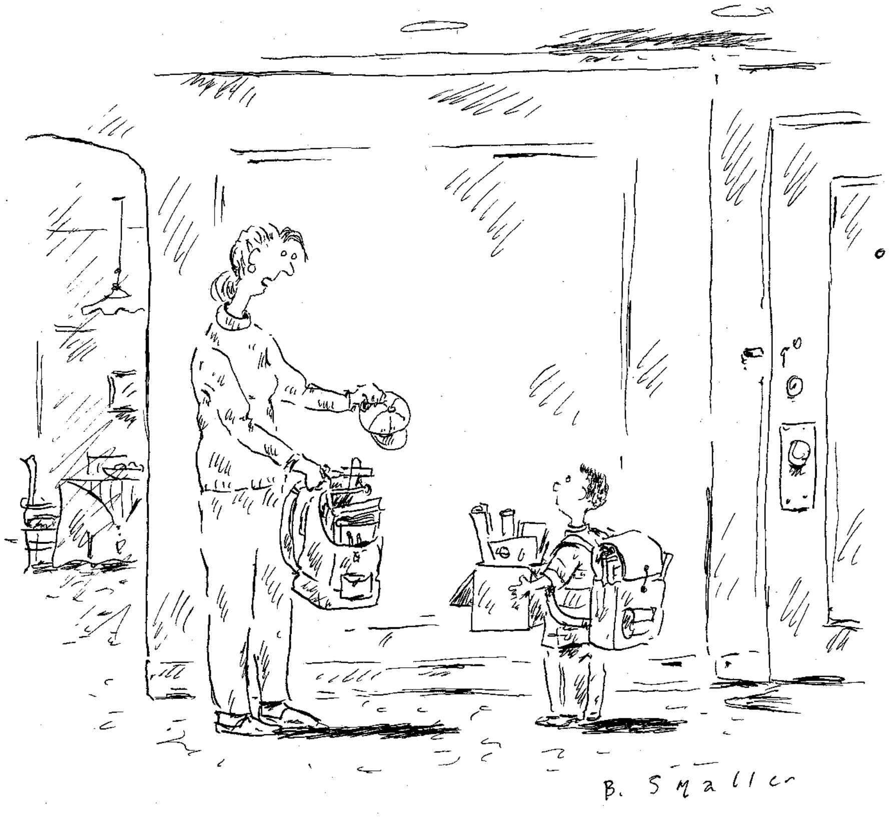
Once Slocum reached that conclusion, she resigned from the board. When Bradley saw this coming, he dispatched a letter to all growers, a preemptive assault that accused her of, among other things, unspecified "unethical business practices."

In a classic Ponzi, of course, the goal of the scammer is to make himself scarce before the victims wise up. Late last January, Bradley, after a fashion, did just that. One tribute to his talents, or perhaps to his muddled motives, was that, even after the suckers figured out that that's what they were, they refused to abandon faith in what he'd been telling them.

A letter dated January 29, 2003, which was signed by Lynn M. Bradley, in her capacity as the company president, and sent to all B&B growers, reported "with great sadness" the death of her husband, Greg. Scrutinized in a certain light, its language now seems to alternate enigmatically between specificity and vagueness. It gives the precise time of his demise ("8:46 a.m. on January 26, 2003"), but the cause is nebulous ("a serious infection and complications . . . I have requested an autopsy . . . of course, I will share the results with you"). Death was unexpected ("We had every reason to believe he would make a complete recovery"), yet, five days before it occurred, he had "granted to me full leadership of B&B Worm Farms, Inc." As for the ceremonial details: "There will not be a burial. Greg requested that he be cremated and his ashes released in Hawaii. When the time is right, that is what I will do."

Less than three weeks later, eight hundred people showed up at a hotel in St. Louis for B&B's national growers' convention. In the past, the purpose of this annual gathering had been as much to rally the troops as to exchange technical information, and this tone again prevailed, underscored by a heavy quotient of valedictories to the fallen leader. One grower who attended, a dump-truck driver who lives north of Oklahoma City, told me that the extravagant veneration of Bradley, especially from his widow, "went on so long a lot of people were getting fidgety." Otherwise, Lynn appeared to be self-possessed as she conveyed the message that growers had been hearing from the get-go and didn't mind hearing once more: The company treasury was full (lots of big numbers were cited); send us your worms; long live B&B!

None of the faithful, therefore, were prepared for the alarmingly contrary message that surfaced almost a month later: B&B had stopped paying for worms. Growers who had harvested in mid-January were, by mid-March, still waiting for their checks. When they called the company headquarters, they could never get through to a human being. Calls placed to the regional distributors led nowhere, because the distributors themselves seemed baffled by the situation. (Invariably, the distributors were growers who had been hired by Bradley to do the heavy lifting—i.e., the recycling of worms.) As the growers chatted among themselves, frustration gave way to panic and then to pleas to government authorities to get involved. On March 19th, the Oklahoma Department of Securities opened an investigation and began posting details on its Web site. Subsequently, the attorneys general of Kentucky and Mississippi intervened. The authorities in these states charged B&B variously with failing to register properly before offering to sell "business opportunities," making "untrue statements of material facts," misappropriating funds, and perpetrating



"School's out—academic summer camp is in."

"Oh, perfect. I can't remember what I wanted from the basement, and you've remarried."

• •

"false, misleading and/or deceptive" acts.

The bankruptcy lawyers went to work in early April, and immediately they were flooded with calls from distraught growers. A fraud examiner retained by B&B's bankruptcy trustee began to catalogue assets and liabilities, an exercise that raised many provocative questions. Why had an earthworm-trading company diverted funds to an auto-body shop in Arizona that happened to be owned by the brother of the company president? Why had B&B invested in a pair of Las Vegas sports-handicapping parlors? And why had it wasted a million dollars trying but failing to launch, in partnership with an erstwhile exotic dancer named Holly Caputo, a pornographic Web site? This venture, in particular, aroused curiosity about Lynn Bradley's knowledge of her husband's business practices.

The most salient attribute of Greg Bradley's executive style, his associates later reported, was a tendency toward paranoia. "Greg let individuals know only what they had to know," David Desormeau, the accountant, said. "Nobody else knew more than about half the story. He was afraid of losing the company. He used to carry the checkbook in his briefcase." Among its implications, this observation had the ring of self-defense. Did it mean that if only Bradley knew the true scope of the deception then no one else was culpable? Even if Bradley was a scoundrel, didn't his misdeeds depend upon the collusion of his victims? Was B&B conceived in fraud, or was the entire fiasco a consequence of grossly inflated optimism? That Bradley was no longer around to answer these questions made them all the more vexing.

One morning in April, I paid a visit to Gerry Danley, the B&B distributor in Cashion, a half hour northwest of Oklahoma City. His place of business was on the main street, opposite a grain elevator and a pair of silver silos, in leased space that previously housed a grocery store and a laundromat. When I arrived, Danley, a pink-faced, soft-spoken man in his early forties, was watering worms—in boxes (his own) and in windrows (B&B's), about three tons in all—with a fine spray hose. After we sat down in his office, we were joined by Rance Stein, his brother-in-law and partner in the worm-growing trade. Our conversation was abbreviated (a bankruptcy appraiser was due to come by), but Danley had time for a partial inventory of his woes: B&B still hadn't paid him for worms he'd harvested in January; he had no other income; his lease was running out and he saw no reason to renew it, but the bankruptcy trustee wouldn't allow him to stop feeding B&B's worms; and B&B had borrowed almost a hundred thousand dollars from the Community State Bank of Cashion and he had personally guaranteed the note.

The bank loan had financed a front-loader, a truck, and some trailers, which Danley bought to transport twenty-three million pounds of horse manure from a racetrack in Oklahoma City, the first phase of a B&B plan to build a second Grower's Pride composting facility, in Cashion. That project was headed nowhere, of course, as was the horse manure—two twenty-foot piles, each the length of a couple of football fields. ("The mountains of Cashion," Rance Stein liked to say. "When it snows, it looks real pretty.") This topographic novelty sat east of town, next to an old airplane hangar, presumably attracting billions of flies and, Danley feared, the attention of environmental regulators. (Sure enough, this spring the piles spontaneously caught fire.)

Danley recalled a strange scene in early January, a couple of weeks before Greg Bradley's death, during a distributors' meeting at a Holiday Inn in Oklahoma City. Though Bradley attended the meeting, in Danley's opinion "he had no business being there, he was too sick, he'd come down with pneumonia." He was in a wheelchair, with an oxygen supply, accompanied by a nurse who seemed to have him on a timer. Periodically, she'd take him back to his room to rest—though en route he'd be seen in the lobby smoking a cigarette. After that encounter, Danley never saw him again. When he heard that Bradley was hospitalized, nobody would say where, and he was discouraged from visiting. As for Lynn Bradley's promise to share the autopsy results, "We still haven't heard back from her on that."

Nor had the thousands of B&B growers, many of whom were inclined to wonder—among other places, in Internet forums—if Bradley's leave-taking wasn't too neatly timed to be believed. The scenario I heard described most frequently had him absconding to the Cayman Islands with fifteen or twenty million bucks. Danley, for one, found it all distasteful. "As far as him not being dead, there's always an outside possibility," he said. "But until it's proven that he's alive I'm not gonna waste my time." The state of Oklahoma had produced a death certificate for Bradley, which stated that he died from a "septic pulmonary abscess." Nevertheless, it was understandable that in the universe of disgruntled worm growers a lot of folks felt that they had paid for the right to speculate about Bradley. If he wasn't in the Caymans, maybe he was in Hawaii—not Greg's ashes, but all of his original molecules. Because the fact was that no matter where Greg had gone, or in what physical condition, their money had vanished with him.

Virtually all the growers I spoke with, never mind what B&B had done to their lives, told me that they still believed in "the vermiculture concept." Greg Bradley might have let people down, either by lying or by dying, but the worms had done what was expected of them. Gary and Pam Williams, when I went to see them in Weleetka, were in mourning for six boxes of worms that he had dumped in the pasture earlier that week.

"There was probably forty or fifty pounds of worms in each bed," Gary said. "At eight dollars a pound. And that's not even talking about the potential that's in there. How'd I feel? I sat down for about thirty minutes thinking, I've worked so hard on this and now I have to dig 'em out and dump 'em in the pasture—maybe I should hold on. Then I said, 'Well, no, I've got to get some of these out of here, because I can't afford to feed 'em.' But I stopped there, because I didn't feel like dumping out any more money in one day."

Pam, a third-grade teacher in the Weleetka public schools, had called home around noon that day, and when Gary told her what he'd done she wanted to cry. After work, she went out in the pasture herself with a rake. "There were all these gorgeous worms," she said. "I raked them into the ground and then we covered them with compost. So that's over."

But it wasn't quite. Last fall, after the first check from B&B arrived, she and Gary had talked a lot about their plans for the future. She'd been teaching for thirty years and, if he could retire young, why couldn't she? They had a grown son and a daughter and grandchildren living nearby. She could spend more time with the grandkids, and, while Gary focussed on growing the worms, she could concentrate on coming up with a way to turn the castings into a separate little cash crop—by, say, bagging and selling them wholesale to a garden-supply store. In March, she had submitted her resignation; a week later came the rumblings that B&B had imploded. As she tried to figure out what to do next, it was probably a blessing that there were still thirty boxes of worms to tend.

Gary was similarly uncertain about his future. "I may have to go back to work," he said. "But Southwestern Bell won't take me. They've been cutting back. I may become a greeter for Wal-Mart."

The next time I spoke with him, a couple of weeks later, he reported that he'd attended some meetings of B&B growers in Oklahoma and Arkansas who were considering joining a co-op to search collectively for a market for their worms. With a critical mass of growers—and without a Greg Bradley manipulating the situation—it might be possible after all to hook up with a legitimate end user. And maybe you really could sell worms and castings to Sierra Leone. Gary had been in touch with a fellow in Ohio who was willing to assume an executive role in organizing the co-op, but he wanted an earnest-money payment of three thousand dollars from each grower.

"Gary, are you sure that's what you want to do?" I asked.

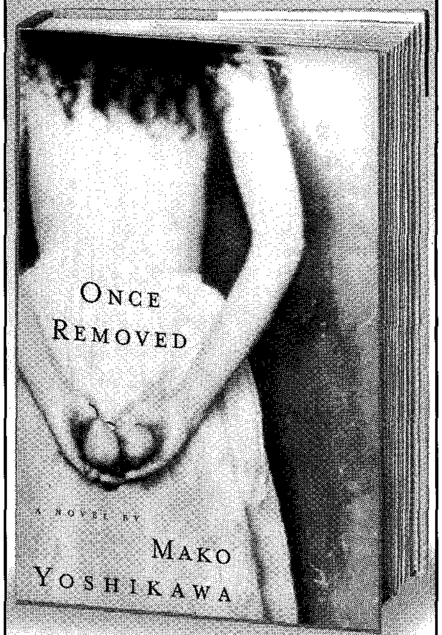
There was a moment of silence, and then he said, "Well, no, I already told him I'm not prepared to put up that much." Another pause. "I told him I'd have to think about it. I said maybe I could give him a thousand." ♦

RAISED EYEBROWS DEPT.

From the Barre-Montpelier (Vt.) Times Argus.

Edward Carroll's girlfriend, Sheila Richards is not pregnant, as it was reported on Thursday. Her daughter is. Also, the mother of Ralph Carroll's children did die last year, however this woman was not his wife. We apologize for the error.

Between the secrets kept and innocence lost, friendship is their saving grace.



From the acclaimed author of *One Hundred and One Ways* comes an exquisite tale of two women and a friendship that transcends the deepest of cultural divides and family betrayals. Long separated, now reunited in their early thirties, these stepsisters-once-removed will face a crisis that tests their relationship as never before.

Mako Yoshikawa
ONE
HUNDRED
AND
ONE
WAYS

Also available—praised as "glistening ... and fresh."
—*The New York Times Book Review*

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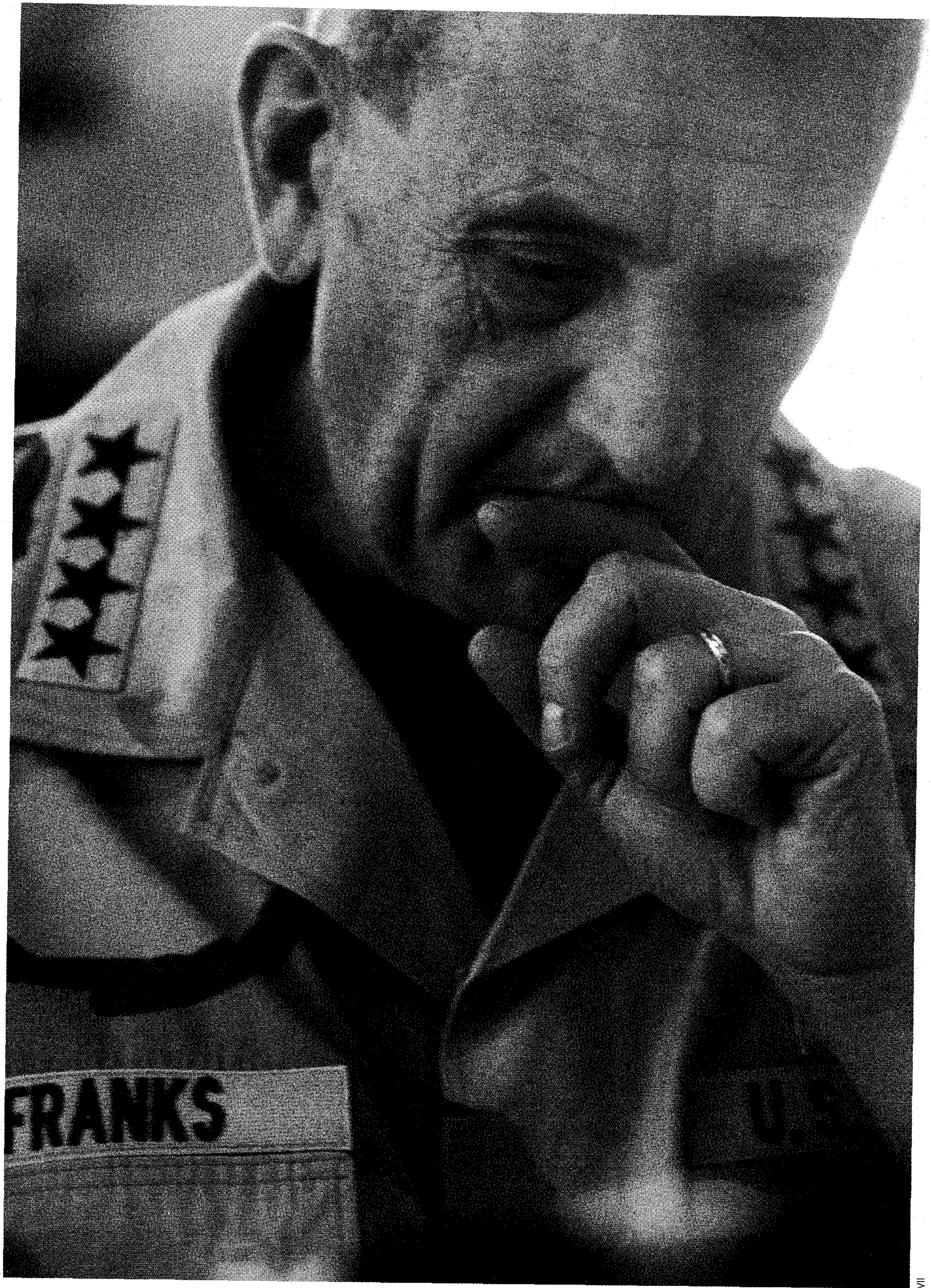


Franks's partnership with Rumsfeld was a long and sometimes contentious journey. Photograph by Christopher Morris.

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE NEW WAR MACHINE

How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military.

BY PETER J. BOYER

The first shots fired by American forces in the global war on terrorism came on October 7, 2001, in a barrage of Tomahawk missiles and bomber strikes that hit Kabul, Kandahar, and other cities in Afghanistan. The American public heard that day from President Bush and shortly thereafter from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers. But the general who was commanding the war did not address the public through the press that day, or that week, or the next. The war was more than a month old before Tommy Franks, accompanied by Rumsfeld, was coaxed into the briefing room at the Pentagon to meet the press.

If Rumsfeld needed an Eisenhower for what some were already calling the Third World War, what the press wanted was a Norman Schwarzkopf, the orotund commander of Desert Storm, whose televised briefings in early 1991 entertained journalists and the public alike. What they got this time was a soldier who, but for the four stars on his shoulders, might have passed for an old gunnery sergeant. A tall, lank Texan with prominent ears and drooping bags under his eyes, Franks bore a weary and slightly sorrowful look. Standing next to Rumsfeld, who was quickened by such encounters with the press, Franks, fifty-six and looking every minute of it, seemed like someone who had just been taken captive.

A reporter suggested that Franks had a duty to keep the American public informed and to help make the case for the war. "And with all due respect, sir," the reporter continued, "what you hear is, Tommy Franks is no Norman Schwarzkopf."

"Well," Franks answered, "I suppose I'd begin sort of at the end, by acknowledging that Tommy Franks *is* no Norman Schwarzkopf."

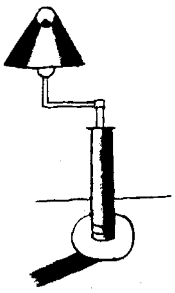
That answer wasn't likely to arouse public confidence in an undertaking that was already seen as floundering, which is perhaps why Rumsfeld leapt to the microphone to amend it ("Nor vice versa!"). But in military circles Franks's remark was telling. If Schwarzkopf had defined the public's idea of a winning general, in the insular world of the Army he was seen as an egotist and a bit of a blowhard, qualities deeply offensive to the institutional culture. Franks was a soldier keenly attuned to that culture. Retired General Crosbie Saint, Franks's friend and former boss, says of the two men, "They are not the same at all. Franks is not a whiner. He is not a pontificator. He is not seeking self-glory. He's a good ol' boy." As it happened, an Army "good ol' boy" was precisely what Donald Rumsfeld needed, a figure who might validate, in the eyes of a deeply skeptical military establishment, the war on terror that Rumsfeld was shaping.

Rumsfeld's second tenure at the Pentagon (the first was during the Ford Administration) has been marked by an agenda for change so insistent and sweeping that it has been likened to a hostile takeover. Rumsfeld believed that the American military was too set in its thinking, too attached to the weapons systems and fighting doctrines of the past—particularly the Army, which is by its nature a heavy and deliberate force, and thus least suited to Rumsfeld's vision of a fighting force that is potent, lithe, and quick. Senior Army leaders who didn't embrace Rumsfeld's ideas (and even some who did) felt discounted or ignored, or, in the case of the Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, publicly humiliated. They were characterized as "Clinton generals"—a reference to the President who had promoted them—or, more broadly, as "Old Army." Most of them were men of a certain age—men like Colin Powell, who had served in Vietnam and taken lessons from that vexed experience, and who had then shaped a force that seemed more comfortable with peacekeeping than with waging war. The military should be used, Powell posited, only when the national interest is clearly at stake, when there is public support, a clearly defined mission, and the political will to apply decisive, overwhelming force. Many of the senior leaders bitterly resented Rumsfeld, and saw his revolution as a repudiation of their doctrines, their values, the great institution of the Army itself. "They hate him. I mean it, they hate him," one of Powell's senior deputies told me earlier this year. "He's lucky he hasn't gotten fragged."

The first time I heard the term "Clinton general" used pejoratively was during a conversation with Newt Gingrich, the former Republican Speaker of the House, in the early autumn of 2001. Gingrich was in a sour mood. The war in Afghanistan, under Franks's direction, was just starting, and progress against the Taliban was slow. Gingrich worried that American military planners were flummoxed by this new kind of war. "I think the underlying fact is that you have Bill Clinton's generals designing a campaign that is not very creative, and it's not very clever, and it's very worrisome," he said.

Gingrich had been out of the House for nearly three years, but he was an ally of Rumsfeld and a member of his Defense Policy Board, an influential advisory group. Gingrich was also one of a number of military theorists in the nineteen-eighties who tried to imagine a new American military suited to a world beyond the Cold War. Their intellectual patron was the late Air Force Colonel John Boyd, whose cardinal tenet was a concept that he called the "OODA loop": success in war is a matter of observing, orienting, deciding, and then acting faster than the enemy. Boyd's brainstorm generated others, and for military thinkers the great quest was figuring out ways to "get inside the other guy's loop."

One result was the rediscovery of the art of maneuver warfare, an old fighting doctrine that became a new article of faith for military reformers. The idea of maneuver warfare is to defeat the enemy by disrupting his capacity to fight rather than by overcoming him in a head-on contest of firepower. A maneuver attack might feature a ferocious assault on the enemy's front as a means of distraction while flanking forces dash to the adversary's rear, enveloping the opponent's force and collapsing it. The German tank blitzkrieg against France in May of 1940 is one of the best-known examples.



The themes of maneuver warfare—speed, agility, flexibility—became the language of the military-reform movement. As a Presidential candidate, George W. Bush had associated himself firmly with the reformers, and with a particular wing of the movement that placed its faith in the transformative power of microchip technology in warfare. This group, which included Rumsfeld and a handful of key defense intellectuals who would form his executive core at the Pentagon, believed in a "revolution in military affairs" triggered by the advent of precision-guided munitions. A smart bomb was the apotheosis of the speed-over-mass ideal, the reformers' fundamental creed.

In office, Rumsfeld and his team synthesized sundry elements of the reform movement into a firm ideology, which they called "transformation." They began a months-long comprehensive review of the military, in which weapons systems, force structures, and even the senior military leadership were measured against the transformation ideal. Precision weapons and a space-based missile defense system were adjudged transformative. A mammoth artillery system called the Crusader, costing eleven billion dollars, was not. (The program was eventually killed.) In any assessment that values speed over mass, the Army is going to lose. Army resentment was so pronounced that some officers in the Pentagon began to refer to Rumsfeld as "the enemy" and to plot strategies to defeat his transformation plans.

Over the years, pockets of reform had appeared within the Army, most notably in 1999, with President Clinton's promotion of General Shinseki to Army Chief of Staff. Shinseki announced a transformation program that anticipated Rumsfeld's, but the Rumsfeld team deemed his effort insufficient. Rumsfeld marginalized him and frustrated his program, and the Army, in turn, used its political influence to impede Rumsfeld on Capitol Hill. Rumsfeld, a lightning rod without a strong constituency in the press or in Congress, was the media's choice as the new Administration's Cabinet secretary most likely to be eased out of his job.

That is where things stood until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the resultant global war on terrorism. Few knew exactly what was coming, or where it would unfold. Rumsfeld himself seemed uncharacteristically at a loss for words ("this conflict, this campaign, this so-called war," he would say). What was certain was that there would be a fight and that it would be waged Rumsfeld's way. And when war came it would almost certainly be fought somewhere in a region stretching from the Horn of Africa, in the west, to Central Asia, in the east, and to the Red Sea, in the north—the region covered by the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), led by an Old Army artilleryman from Texas.

Friends and retired officers made clear what they hoped for from Tommy Franks in the autumn of 2001 as he designed the war on terror with Donald Rumsfeld. "He's not the kind of guy who is convinced that some number of laser-guided munitions at a standoff distance is going to do the job every time," retired Colonel Stephen Robinette told the Washington *Post*. The same article also quoted two retired generals who were longtime friends of Franks. "I think he would say we need to proceed carefully with what we're doing to conventional forces," said retired Major General Leo J. Baxter, who also expressed confidence that Franks would do right by the Army's conventional forces. In sum, retired Lieutenant General Randall Rigby said, "We've got a lot of faith in old Tommy bubba."

What these men did not know was that, amid the disharmony between Rumsfeld and the military, their Old Army buddy had come to his own conclusion.

Franks owed the Army everything. For a young man growing up in Midland, Texas, the Army wasn't so much a career choice as a lifeline. His daughter Jacqy, who is herself married to a military officer, says, "The Army saved Dad."

The Army saved Franks from the life of inconsequence, or worse, that is so often the portion of young men of his social station in places like Midland. The boom-and-bust oil town in the desolate Permian Basin attracted an influx of postwar risktakers. Many of those who staked themselves and came to Midland looking for the big chance, like George H. W. Bush, a senator's son from Yankee aristocracy, made it big. Some, like Harold Welch, whose daughter, Laura, would one day marry George W. Bush, capitalized on the sudden new money by carving the dreary basin into real-estate developments. On the other side of town, people like Ray and Lorene Franks, Tommy's parents, managed to earn a living and get by, but only just.

Ray Franks, who grew up in Seminole, Oklahoma, was a mechanic, and a good one, even though a childhood accident cost him an eye and the tips of his fingers on one hand. Midland had work for men who could use tools, and Lorene's sister owned a beauty shop there, so when Tommy was nine Ray moved his family to Texas. He found work in the shops around town, and Lorene, whom the family called Pete, sold homemade cakes through her sister's shop.

Not long ago, Tommy Franks jokingly reassured President Bush that he had never asked Laura Welch for a date when they were in high school together. In truth, given the sociology of that time and place, it's hardly likely that he would have. Laura came from a prosperous family and was in the popular crowd at Robert E. Lee High School. She was on the student council and the yearbook staff, and she was a member of the Rebelee Court. Like many of her contemporaries in Midland, she doesn't remember Tommy from high school. His only extracurricular activity was the Rebel football team, and even then the yearbook got his name wrong—"Charlie Franks"—in the team picture. Tommy liked to hunt, ride motorcycles, and work on cars. "He was a car guy," his cousin David Foster recalls. "I used to love going riding around with Tommy. He had the fastest cars. He loved to drive fast. The family, of course, just hated for me to get in a car with Tommy."

After high school, Franks enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin, but flunked out in his sophomore year and enlisted in the Army. "I was a kid trying to grow up," he says now.

It was 1965, the year of the big American buildup in Vietnam. Franks may have looked like just another dumb country boy, but his Army superiors discerned qualities in him that had gone unremarked at home. If nothing else, he worked hard and he learned fast. After basic training, he was put into an Army intelligence unit, where his superior, Corporal Sam Long, suggested that he try to enroll in Officer Candidate School. "I said, 'Well, gosh, that sounds like a good thing to me,' so I did that," Franks says. Back in Midland, the social order was an insinuation, enforced by the unspoken rules of the culture, but in the Army rank was spelled out right there on the uniform. Franks found that he liked the idea of being saluted. He graduated from artillery school and was commissioned a second lieutenant at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in 1967, and shortly thereafter shipped out to Vietnam. He was a fire-support officer and a forward observer, which meant that his job was to probe enemy positions and direct fire upon them. He was wounded in action three times and was awarded three Purple Hearts, although even his family isn't sure of the details. "My dad never talked about Vietnam," Jacqy says. "To this day, he never talked about Vietnam to me. I think it scarred him. . . . I know that he was shot in the leg, and the bullet was in pretty deep. It's not anything he complains about, but it left quite a scar."

After his tour, Franks returned to Fort Sill, where he commanded a cannon battery. In a chapel there in 1969, he married a local girl, Cathy Carley, whom he had met before the war. The prospect of marriage reinforced Franks's sense of his limitations. Cathy had graduated from college, and wanted to teach; Franks was a junior Army officer with a high-school diploma. He determined to go back to school, even if it meant leaving the Army. He recalls telling Cathy, "We're going to get out of the service. I don't have a college degree, and I need to do that, because of my view of myself, if nothing else."

Again, the Army intervened. "Within a matter of weeks—it was sort of like Providence, perhaps grace—my battalion commander, a fella by the name of Al Lamas, said, 'Would you like to go back to college?' And I said, 'You mean you guys in the military would pay, and let me do that?' And he said, 'You bet.' " Franks enrolled in the Army's Boot Strap Degree Completion Program, getting his bachelor's in business administration at U.T.-Arlington in 1971. The price of his degree was another contract to stay in the Army, which had lost much of a generation of young officers in Vietnam.

It was a trying moment for Army careerists, and those who stayed internalized the lessons of Vietnam and the "hollow military" years of the Carter Administration. But there was opportunity, too. Franks rose steadily up the command chain, and in the late seventies he landed an invaluable posting in Washington, where he worked as an investigator for the Army's Inspector General's office and then as a congressional liaison and executive assistant for two Army Chiefs of Staff. Franks would say, "I don't do politics," but he was there just as the early stirrings of a military-reform movement were being felt, and his time at the Pentagon gave him close-up schooling in the art of bureaucratic warfare.

Franks was second-in-charge of the key 1st Cavalry Division during Desert Storm, in 1991, and by the end of the

THE DELUSIONAL WORLD OF THE
FREE-RANGE CHICKEN
This is the life, isn't it?
You said it, sister! I'm gonna explore that big, wide world out there!
Ain't no stopping us now!

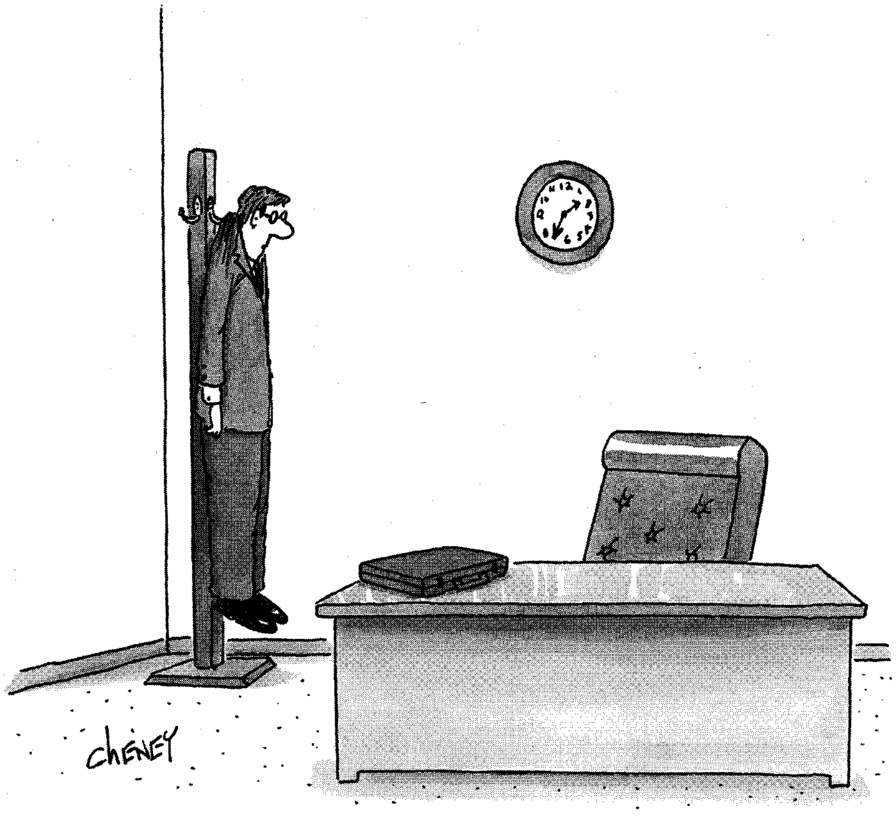
nineties he had taken command of the Third Army, overseeing the ground forces in Central Command. President Clinton, in his last year in office, nominated Franks for a fourth star, and the command position at CENTCOM, largely on the recommendation of General Anthony Zinni, his predecessor. Zinni believed that Saddam Hussein was so dangerous that a second war against Iraq was possible, and he knew that Franks was thoroughly acquainted with the contingency war plan that was waiting on the shelf at the Pentagon. It was a plan that Franks had helped to create.

Tommy Franks knew that he had become the commanding general in the war against terror as a matter of "happenstance," one of Rumsfeld's top aides in the Defense Department recalled. "He happened to be the commanding general of CENTCOM." But it didn't mean that he couldn't be replaced. The Bush team had not chosen Franks, and his Old Army credentials were hardly qualifications for the new style of war that Rumsfeld foresaw, beginning with a campaign in Afghanistan. "Franks was very blunt early on," Newt Gingrich recalls. "He just said this to Rumsfeld: 'If you can't work with anybody who Bill Clinton promoted, you need to get a whole new team. But if you want to work with me I'll work my heart out for you.' "

President Bush had asked for a war plan for Afghanistan on September 12th, and Rumsfeld and Franks delivered it within ten days. The General and the Secretary had to develop a working relationship on the fly, even as they were trying to fashion a plan from a set of options representing two contradictory impulses—the Army's way and Rumsfeld's way.

The Afghanistan campaign was precisely the sort of conflict that Rumsfeld's transformation had anticipated, and the military's plan for it—which would take months to execute—was exactly what Rumsfeld thought was wrong with the military. He argued that the plan would have to be something entirely new, because the nature of the enemy was entirely new. "The Taliban and Al Qaeda do not have armies, navies, and air forces," he said.

Rumsfeld wanted an unconventional war. It would exploit American advantages in technology with unmanned drones and precision weapons, and it would come as close as a Western nation can come to answering terrorism in kind—with a full deployment of Special Forces, operating "behind the wire." To the degree that there would be a "conventional" ground fight at all, it, too, would be unconventional—with special operators organizing and leading indigenous militias and calling in air strikes from Navy and Air Force warplanes.



Army commanders had an institutional prejudice against integrating Special Forces into a main battle plan, and not entirely without reason. By an act of Congress, Special Forces operated under separate command (and were budgeted separately). Much of what they do is classified, meaning that some of their missions are kept secret even from the battlefield commanders of conventional forces, which adds confusion to an undertaking that is by its nature chaotic. To Rumsfeld, that was another bureaucratic encumbrance that the Army needed to overcome. "While certain things have to be top secret and compartmentalized, most of it does not," General John M. (Jack) Keane, an advocate of integrating Special Forces with conventional troops, says. "So we just got past all of that."

Franks had been struck by the disastrous record of the Soviet conventional forces in Afghanistan—ten years and thirteen thousand dead Soviet soldiers—and he agreed to construct a war plan "from whole cloth." With Special Forces "A teams" inserted to work with the Northern Alliance and other indigenous fighters, the first American conventional force sent to Afghanistan was a Marine Expeditionary Force. It wasn't until Kabul and Kandahar had fallen that the first significant Army force got into the fight. Even then, it was on Rumsfeld's terms. In a conventional war, the Army uses artillery to suppress enemy fire. But in Afghanistan very few artillery units were deployed. Instead, soldiers were forced to call in air strikes when, for example, they began to take fire from Taliban mortars. This type of fighting—"combined arms" or "joint" warfare—was the very essence of the reform ideology.

The Army hated what came to be called "the Afghanistan model" of war. Army officers complained that the plan was too hastily considered, that it relied too much on Special Forces and untrustworthy native militias, and that the lack of artillery risked American lives, because air support was often too slow to arrive, if it came at all. And, they argued, if there had been more conventional forces on the ground Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar would not have escaped.

"Virginia Woolf meets 'Car Talk.'"

In the coming months, Rumsfeld killed plans for the Army's cherished Crusader artillery system, leading to a showdown before Congress between Rumsfeld and General Shinseki. But by then Rumsfeld had effectively done away with Shinseki; the Defense Department leaked word of Shinseki's chosen successor as Army Chief of Staff fourteen months before his term would end, making him a lame duck. Rumsfeld chose General Keane, who had earlier brought to the Army training fields the idea of mixing Special Forces with conventional forces. Rumsfeld also began to stack the deck, insuring that the Army's top leadership comprised officers amenable to transformation; every general officer in line to receive a third or fourth star now had to pass through a screening process, including two or more interviews with Rumsfeld or one of his top assistants. "When you're the Secretary of Defense and you personally interview everybody for three and four stars, you politicize your general-officer corps," a top Army official complains. "That's what they accused Clinton of doing, and now *they're* doing it. If you're asking general officers if they agree with political decisions, then you're not asking for the best professional military advice."

But Rumsfeld was playing to a constituency of one, the President, and Bush enthusiastically endorsed the Afghanistan model as the American way of war. "This revolution in our military is only beginning, and it promises to change the face of battle," Bush said, in December, 2001. "Afghanistan has been a proving ground for this new approach. These past two months have shown that an innovative doctrine and high-tech weaponry can shape and then dominate an unconventional conflict."

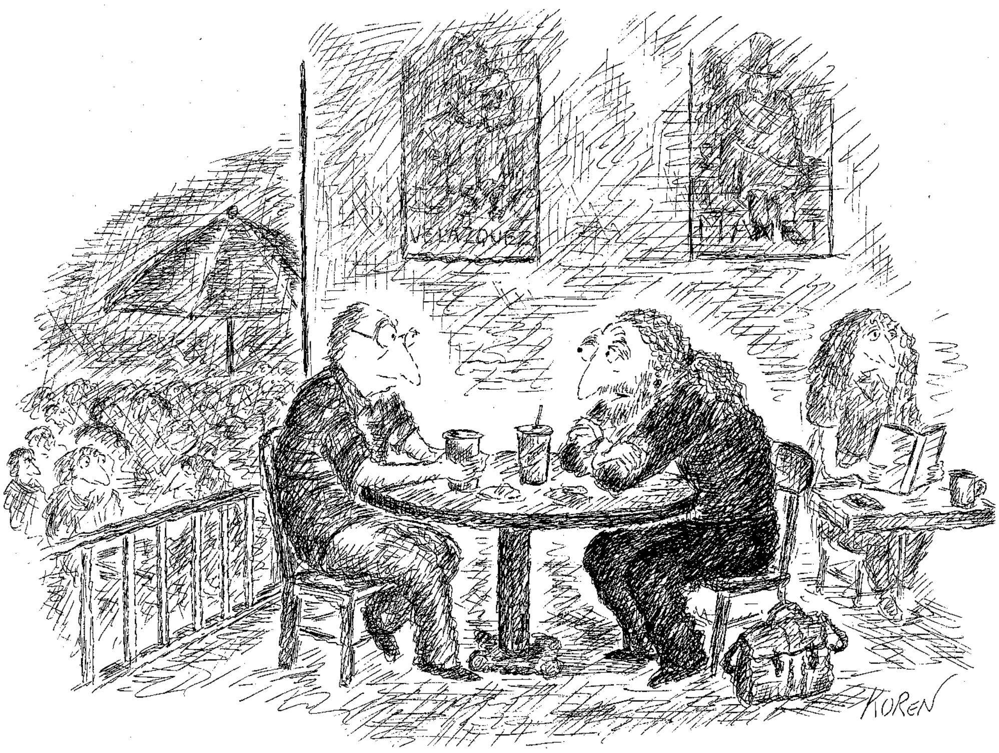
Franks had made an important turn, professionally and personally, during his dealings with Rumsfeld. The back-and-forth of war planning, Franks says, "caused me to respect him a lot. And you ought to ask him if he respects me. My guess is he'd probably say that he does." Some in the Army thought that Franks had gone beyond respect to sycophancy. One Army official has referred to him as "Rumsfeld's general." Months after the main combat operations ended, there were complaints that Franks, of all people, had co-authored a plan that put the Marines in first and diminished artillery.

Last fall, the criticism turned nasty when someone informed Army investigators that Franks had violated security rules by allowing his wife, Cathy, to remain in his presence when he was discussing a classified matter, and that he had violated rules about the use of government property by letting her fly with him on military aircraft. Cathy Franks more than occasionally accompanied her husband on his specially outfitted military plane for the long flights between CENTCOM headquarters, in Tampa, and CENTCOM's area of responsibility, half a world away. "When you have to travel as much as he does away from home, you want to take a part of your home with you," Jacqy says. "She makes him comfortable, and drives him, and gives him energy. There is real adoration there, from both sides." Rumsfeld shrugged off the allegations, and Franks was eventually cleared of wrongdoing. He applied to have Cathy's security-clearance level raised.

Rumsfeld was plainly convinced that Tommy Franks had come over to his side, and he determined that if there was to be a war with Iraq it would be commanded by Franks. When Franks's term at CENTCOM expired last summer, Rumsfeld and Bush asked him to extend his tenure for another year, and Franks agreed. He was now a Bush-Rumsfeld general. As Bush later put it, "I really trust Tommy. We speak the same language."

The Army was desperately worried that Rumsfeld and his team had taken the wrong lessons—dangerous lessons, even—from Afghanistan, if they were to be applied to a future war in someplace like Iraq. There was a good possibility that the lack of artillery had led to American casualties, including seven soldiers who were killed and dozens who were wounded by enemy mortar rounds or small-arms fire in a battle called Operation Anaconda. The greatest fear was that the Afghanistan model would be used to rationalize the deployment of minimal ground forces in future conflicts. I posed that prospect to Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz a year ago. "I think you need people on the ground," he said. "I just think it would be nice if you could do it with less of them, and if you could deploy them faster, so that the next time there's a Desert Storm it doesn't take six months to get ready for it."

As it happened, Wolfowitz was already making the case for the next war in Iraq, arguing in a series of speeches and briefings that an Iraq freed from Saddam Hussein could become a model of democracy and tolerance in the Middle East. And Rumsfeld was preparing for



"I'm still digging out from my parents."

it. He asked Franks to bring him a plan for an invasion of Iraq.

Franks's plan amounted to the military establishment's blueprint for the American way of war. It was what Franks calls the "no-risk plan," and having helped draft it he knew it cold. As Franks says, it called for "a whole bunch of divisions, a whole bunch of jets, a whole bunch of bombs, a whole bunch of aircraft carriers." That translated to a force of more than two hundred thousand troops, including three divisions of "heavy" forces—armored tanks and personnel carriers. It was not at all what Rumsfeld had in mind.

"That is truly, I mean, that is a big force," Rumsfeld said, as Franks recalls it.

"That's absolutely right," Franks responded.

"Do we need that?" Rumsfeld asked.

"Absolutely not," Franks said. "I'm gonna come next week and we'll talk about a little bit different variant of this." Franks's recollection plainly softens his exchanges with Rumsfeld, which were, by most accounts, quite heated at times. Rumsfeld himself has said that when he and his team looked at the off-the-shelf plan for Iraq, their reaction was "No way! That's not going to work."

For several months, Franks kept coming back with new plans. It was an arduous, excruciating process, one very closely followed by the military grapevine. The Powell doctrine itself was at stake. Implicitly, the Powell doctrine held that the commitment of overwhelming force carried such a political cost that the civilian leadership would resort to it only cautiously. Many in the last two Administrations, however, believed the doctrine had led to a paralyzing aversion to risk. "What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?" Madeleine Albright once asked Colin Powell. Devotion to a fixed idea of "overwhelming force" also tended to stifle doctrinal innovation and battlefield ingenuity.

The argument for using a large force in any new Gulf war was partly based on an estimate of Saddam's military strength at as high as three hundred and seventy-five thousand troops. But there was also the ambitious nature of the mission itself. As the war plan evolved, it became clear that the Bush Administration *meant to* send the American military on a truly audacious undertaking: simultaneously to overturn Saddam's regime, to preserve Iraq's natural resources and infrastructure, to minimize "collateral damage" (civilian casualties), and even to allow much of the Iraqi Army to survive so that it could help to restore order after the war. In that light, it seemed to some that Franks's first proposal, for some two hundred thousand troops—less than half the number used to oust Saddam from Kuwait in the first Gulf War—was relatively modest.

Rumsfeld's starting position, what Franks called the other "bookend" in the range of options, was "a little bitty ground force"—eighty thousand troops or less—"and overwhelming airpower." The view that wars can be won mostly with airpower is an irksome one to Army officers, and Franks is no exception. "My response to that was 'How did we do with the Kuwaiti oil fields the last time we took that approach?' " During the thirty-eight-day bombing campaign that preceded the ground war in Operation Desert Storm, Saddam's forces blackened the Gulf skies by igniting the Kuwaiti oil fields. In response to the proposition that a significant ground force wasn't required, Franks again cited the first Gulf War. "How long did it take to get the Iraqis out of Kuwait? The answer to the question is: Duration of the war." For all the bombing, Saddam's forces did not quit Kuwait until they were chased out by American tanks.

As Rumsfeld and his circle argued from one bookend, Franks slowly worked his way down from the other ("You have to have somebody for the enemy to give their guns to"), until a compromise suggested itself: the war would start with a force of a hundred thousand or less, but deployment orders would be given to a much larger force, which could be fed into the battlefield as needed, through an open "pipeline."

It was an elegant solution. Rumsfeld's model would be given a chance to work, and if that failed the war would be won the Army way, with overwhelming ground force. "If the cost begins to approach a gamble," Franks says, "then you put in the pipeline forces, which guarantee success in the event you've miscalculated with the start force." As it turned out, diplomatic developments so delayed the start of the war that by the time it began Franks had more than ninety thousand combat forces and more than a hundred thousand pipeline forces in the area.

Franks and Rumsfeld took their plan to Bush. "It was one of those things where we all reached a comfort zone," Franks says. "We looked at each other and we said, 'If we do this, we win.' "

In the days and weeks before that proposition would be tested on the battlefield, Rumsfeld and Franks continued to refine the plan. Rumsfeld spent long hours thinking of things that could go wrong, filling pages of a legal pad with what-if questions and then passing them on to Franks and his commanders, who were doing the same thing themselves. They worried the plan into a kaleidoscopic construct of almost infinite options, categorized on the computerized chart into "branches" and "sequels." Franks could go to his laptop and punch in "equipment" and pull out layers of information, all the way down to the number of replacement combat boots in inventory. As they went into battle, according to Major General Victor E. (Gene) Renuart, Franks's director of operations, "In every commander's psyche, there was a mixed emotion of, Did I forget something? Do we have everything in place? Are we really sure we've answered all the what-if questions?" The fretting continued until March 19th, when Bush sent the coalition forces to the battlefield.

"Mr. President, the rules of engagement are in place," Franks told the President from Saudi Arabia via video telephone. "The command and control is in place. And this force is ready to go." Franks then detailed the time and sequence for the start of the war, which would begin with stealth. Thirty-one teams of Special Forces (about ten members to a team) would enter Iraq in darkness that night. Forty-eight hours later, after sundown in Baghdad, an intense air campaign would begin, followed the next morning, Saturday, March 22nd, by the movement of ground forces into Iraq.

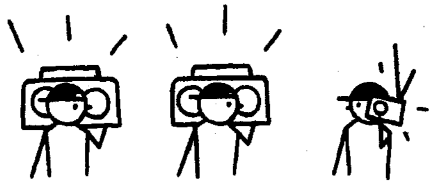
The men saluted each other, and Bush left the situation room to get some fresh air. Franks flew from Saudi Arabia to his headquarters in Doha, Qatar.

Franks was still, however, fighting an undercurrent of ill will from within the military. In the weeks before the war, Norman Schwarzkopf had gone public with the Army's grievance against Rumsfeld, calling the Defense Secretary's micromanagement of the war plan "scary." "When he makes his comments, it appears that he disregards the Army . . . that he is the guy driving the train and everybody else better fall in line behind him—or else," Schwarzkopf told the Washington *Post*. "There are guys at the Pentagon who have been involved in operational planning for their entire lives, O.K.? . . . And for this wisdom, acquired during many operations, wars, schools, for that just to be ignored, and in its place have somebody who doesn't have any of that training, is of concern."

Schwarzkopf had uttered what many Army officers had long felt. Not since the Vietnam War had there been such pronounced dissonance between the civilian and the military leadership in a time of war. Schwarzkopf's view reflected the institutional sentiment, including that of some of the commanders in the field.

Franks ignored the criticism. His peers were bothered, he says now, only because they didn't know the plan. "There are only five people in the United States of America who knew the plan," he says. "The President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, Dick Myers, Pete Pace"—the vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—"and me. . . . I think that construct would have been appreciated by about anyone who has worn the uniform, had they been able to see it."

The plan reflected Franks's commitment to the Rumsfeld way of war: the efficacy of speed and precision over mass. Afghanistan had convinced him of the utility of precision and of Special Forces, and he allowed himself to be convinced that they could be applied to a very different sort of war in Iraq. In planning for Iraq, Franks accorded to Special Forces a far larger, broader role than had ever been imagined (and once the war began that role would expand even more). Where Special Operations forces had once been considered "behind the wire" guys who worked apart from the main fight, Franks installed Brigadier General Gary Harrell (one of the hot-shot Delta Force officers featured in "Black Hawk Down") in command headquarters, along with representatives of the C.I.A. There would be hundreds of "shadow soldiers" on the battlefield, effectively replacing two conventional divisions. In that sense, the battle plan had dictated the force size.



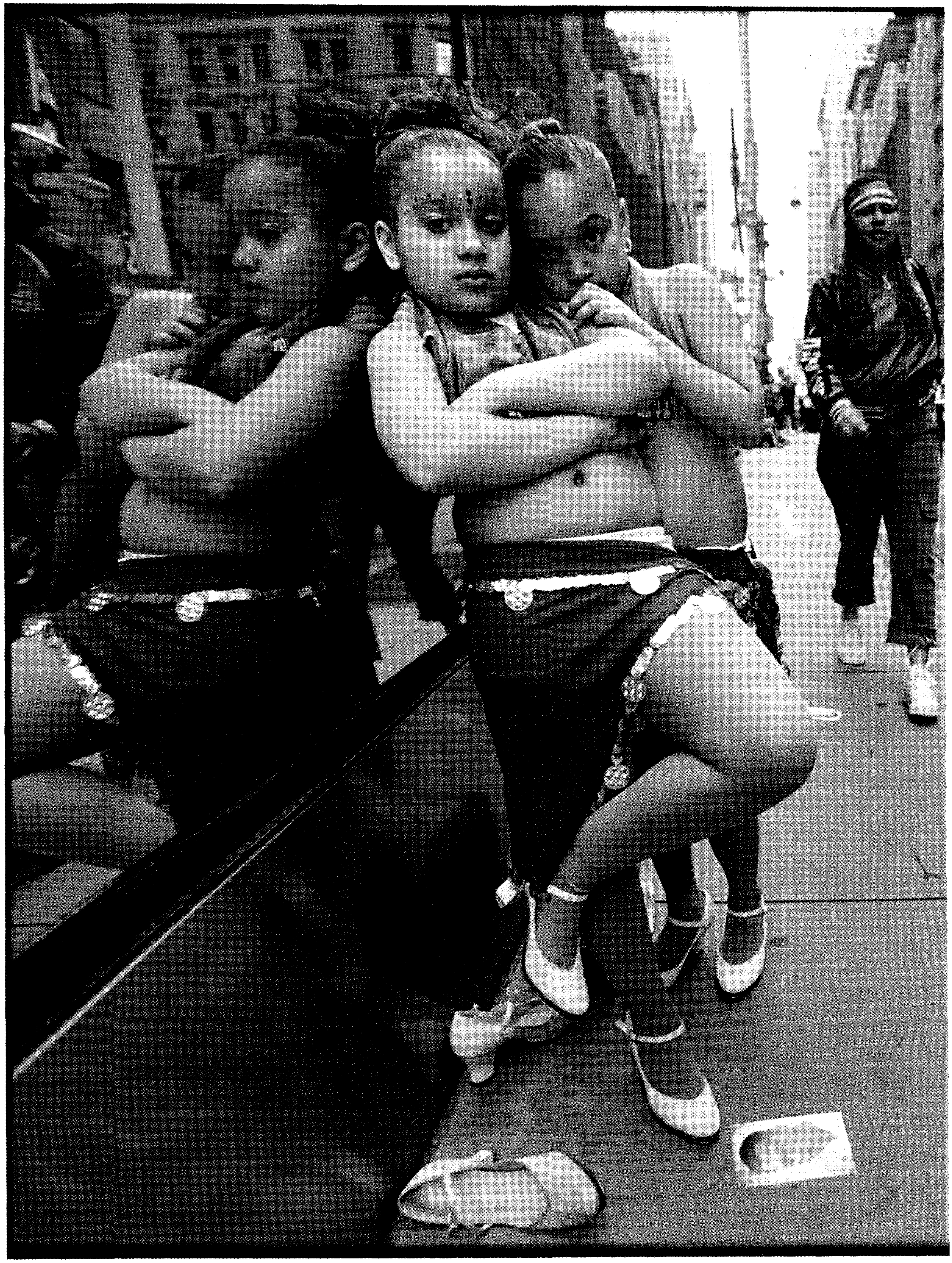
The plan envisaged five fronts, Franks says: "A front from the south, one from the north, one from the west, one directly in the environment of Baghdad proper, and the fifth one was information operations."

During the first forty-eight hours of the war, Special Forces teams would slip into Iraq at night, with one set of teams assigned to kill enemy observers stationed near the Kuwait border. Another would move into western Iraq from Jordan, neutralizing missile launchers in the "Scud box" that potentially threatened Israel and Jordan. Others would move toward Baghdad, joining C.I.A. paramilitaries who had been in the city for weeks. In the Persian Gulf, teams of Polish commandos were assigned the job of taking the Iraqi oil platforms.

The plan called for heavy conventional forces to move into Iraq from the south and the north, converging on Baghdad. In the north, the Army's 4th Infantry Division would stage its attack from Turkey, secure the oil fields near Kirkuk, and then move toward Baghdad. The 4th Infantry Division was to be joined by the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which would be flown in from Italy.

In the south, the First Marine Expeditionary Force would move from Kuwait into Rumaila, secure the oil fields there, and then fight its way up the Euphrates Valley to Baghdad.

The Army's mammoth 3rd Infantry Division (with ten thousand tanks, Bradleys, and other vehicles) would also move in from Kuwait. But instead of plodding in the conventional manner, fighting for every town and bridge, winning and holding ground, it was to dash straight through to within striking distance of Baghdad. "Their purpose was to kill what they had to kill and to bypass



FORWARD, MARCH BY MARY ELLEN MARK *Candice Lozada, nine, and Fantashia Toro, eleven, of the S.B.K. (South Bro*

Roca Wear
HITN-T
PUBLIC TELEVISION NETWORK

ds) Dance Group, waiting for the Puerto Rican Day Parade to start.

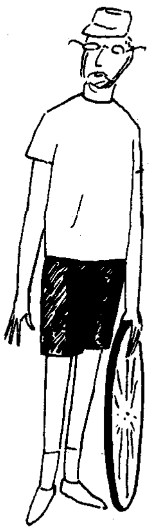
it," Franks says, "and to move as quickly as they could to Baghdad."

It was war fighting straight from the reformers' handbook, a maneuver designed to use speed to pressure the enemy's rear—Baghdad—in the hope of prompting a quick collapse. Franks hoped that if he could get his forces to Baghdad quickly enough it would stop the enemy from making a fighting retreat into the city, where it could dig in and fortify, creating the conditions for a bloody urban fight—the coalition's nightmare scenario. In one war and more than a decade of near-war with the Western allies, Baghdad had never before been directly pressured.

The planned dash to Baghdad carried a risk—a long supply line (it would be the Marines' longest march since they stormed the shores of Tripoli) that was vulnerable to attack. "There's a difference between a risk and a gamble," Franks says. "A risk is something that is appropriate in a given circumstance. A gamble is something from which one cannot recover forces." Franks believed that, with a pipeline of reserve forces, he was not gambling with his troops' lives.

From the start, Franks knew there could be no prolonged preliminary air war, which could soften the enemy but could also increase civilian casualties and give Saddam time to create an environmental disaster, further hardening world opinion against the war. Instead, there would be a short, intense bombing campaign lasting for as little as two days. Planners called it "Shock and Awe."

Franks said that the plan was, above all, flexible, and, as things turned out, it needed to be. Before the war even started, there was a significant hitch in the form of an inconvenient expression of democracy in Turkey, whose parliament voted against the country's use as a staging ground. That decision removed from the battlefield the Army's 4th Infantry Division—one of only two full heavy divisions committed. The 3rd Infantry Division and the lighter Marine unit were left as the main conventional forces, a design that was much closer to Rumsfeld's original vision. Rather than insisting upon a delay, Franks changed the plan. Instead of attacking from the north and trying to destroy the two Iraqi divisions there, the coalition would try to "fix" the enemy forces in place, keeping them from joining the fight in the south. Franks hoped to do that with Special Forces, working with the anti-Saddam units of the Kurdish *peshmerga* and the lightly armed 173rd Airborne, and by deception. Franks had long been getting signals from the Turks that they would refuse the coalition a staging area, but he decided not to move more than thirty cargo ships that were floating in the Mediterranean with the 4th Infantry Division's equipment, vehicles, and supplies. The hope was to deceive the Iraqis into believing that there would be a northern front at least long enough to make them delay a move south.



Plans were also changed by a C.I.A. operative on the ground in Baghdad, who was tracking Saddam's movements. Just hours after Bush's teleconference with Franks, the agent informed CENTCOM that he had located Saddam inside a compound called Dora Farms. A "hit" would require Presidential approval, and the President's forty-eight-hour ultimatum period had not yet expired. "The intelligence information came to be more and more clear," Franks says. But the President insisted "that we would not execute a takedown inside of Baghdad until the expiration of that period." The President had long ago authorized a covert effort to kill or oust Saddam, but he was squeamish about starting the war with a takedown attempt; the opening images of the war might be Al Jazeera pictures of Saddam's dead or wounded grandchildren. The military's primary concern was the effect on the war plan. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Richard Myers, called Franks on the Commander's special "red switch" phone connecting him to the Pentagon. Could the coalition launch a quick strike against Dora Farms, and would it change the plan? "Yes, we can certainly do that," Franks answered, "and it has no effect at all." He added that it was only a matter of getting "penetrators"—bunker-busting bombs—loaded on the F-117A stealth bombers that would deliver the strike, along with ship-launched Tomahawk missiles.

The prospect of killing Saddam trumped the possibility of civilian casualties and scenes of smoking rubble. The President approved the strike, and just before dawn on Thursday, March 20th, four one-ton satellite-guided bombs and forty Tomahawk missiles hit Dora Farms. The intelligence source in Baghdad reported a direct hit, and it has been the official American line ever since that Saddam may have been killed in the strike. "People can trick this, and think about it in a lot of different ways," Franks said after the war. "But . . . I still haven't seen anything that convinces me that Saddam Hussein's alive." American military forensics teams were still sifting through the rubble in the hope of deciding the issue, and as the weeks passed it seemed increasingly likely that Saddam had survived.

Franks had told Myers that the strike at Saddam wouldn't change the war plan, but indirectly it did. A primary objective of the plan was to seize the oil fields before Saddam could torch them. The productive fields in the south were particularly important; they had been used for Iraq's "oil for food" program during the long sanctions period, and the coalition wanted to get them running again quickly after the war, to help pay for Iraq's reconstruction. Intelligence sources had spotted several trains carrying explosives into the south, toward the Rumaila region, suggesting that Saddam was making a move on the oil fields. "The concern then was, if Saddam had not planned to blow those oil fields just yet, the fact that we may have tried to target him personally or his family and senior leaders may have tipped the scales," General Renuart says. Commanders on the ground saw an opening: Saddam had not yet positioned forces that would block a quick move from the south toward Rumaila. The war plan called for Shock and Awe first, but Franks seized the chance and ordered the start of the ground war. "I made the decision to do the ground force early because our reconnaissance told us that we had the opportunity to get the southern oil fields intact," Franks says. Seven wells were set on fire, and explosives were found in others, but more than three hundred were secured unscathed.

Starting the ground war before the air campaign also provided an element of surprise, an unlikely advantage for a coalition force that had been showily building for months. Franks and his commanders did not discourage authoritative news reports of the anticipated Shock and Awe bombing campaign, and the command counted on Iraqis believing that it would come first. "I think we tried to reinforce the concept that this would be days of air campaign, followed by ground," Renuart says. Franks hints as much, too. "Sometimes even the critics can be deceived," he says.

At four in the afternoon on Thursday, March 20th, a Marine light armored patrol made contact with a group of Iraqi personnel carriers and destroyed them. The long, clamorous convoy of the 3rd Infantry Division began its dash to a line outside Baghdad extending from Karbala to Kut. By the next morning, the division had advanced two hundred miles on Baghdad.

By Saturday, the coalition claimed to have taken the crossroads town of Nasiriya and Iraq's only deep-water port, Umm Qasr, where a marine hoisted an American flag. That afternoon, on the third day of the war, Tommy Franks made his first appearance at CENTCOM's Coalition Media Center, outside Doha. He said, "Let me begin by saying this will be a campaign unlike any other in history, a campaign characterized by shock, by surprise, by flexibility, by the employment of precise munitions on a scale never seen before, and by the application of overwhelming force."

As Franks spoke that first Saturday of the war, surrounded by a thirty-eight-foot world map, digital clocks displaying the time in the war zone and in Washington, and an array of plasma video screens projecting battlefield images, he seemed to be at the very epicenter of the global war on terrorism. But he was standing on a briefing stage, finished just days before the war (at a cost of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars), that had been devised by a Hollywood set designer to look like the hub of decision and, by implication, of news. Actual news emanated from the Coalition Media Center only by mistake, however, when someone strayed from the script. CENTCOM had credentialled thousands of journalists to cover the war from Franks's headquarters in Doha, but when the war began the Coalition Media Center was subjected to an information blackout that lasted two full days, and a virtual news blackout that lasted well beyond that.

The media strategy was coördinated

in part by the Office of Global Communications, a sort of para-information unit associated with the political wing of the White House. The unit, staffed by a team of young and intensely political communications operatives, was created to shape the American message. (They portrayed the Afghanistan conflict as a war of liberation for Afghanistan's oppressed women.) The unit's plan for the Iraq war, mimicking the real war plan, was to orchestrate the dynamics of the information "battlefield" and to control the outcome—the message of the war. (The Bush Administration's fixation on "story-lining" the war could have unexpected consequences—especially in the search for weapons of mass destruction.)

The war would first be seen from the viewpoint of the five hundred or so reporters and crew who were embedded with the military units, a brilliant conception that had several advantages. One was that it instantly eliminated the culture gap between the press and the military. "These guys are going to be a band of brothers with our troops," one commanding general said. "It's a great thing." Nothing creates empathy like a three-hundred-mile ride inside a Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

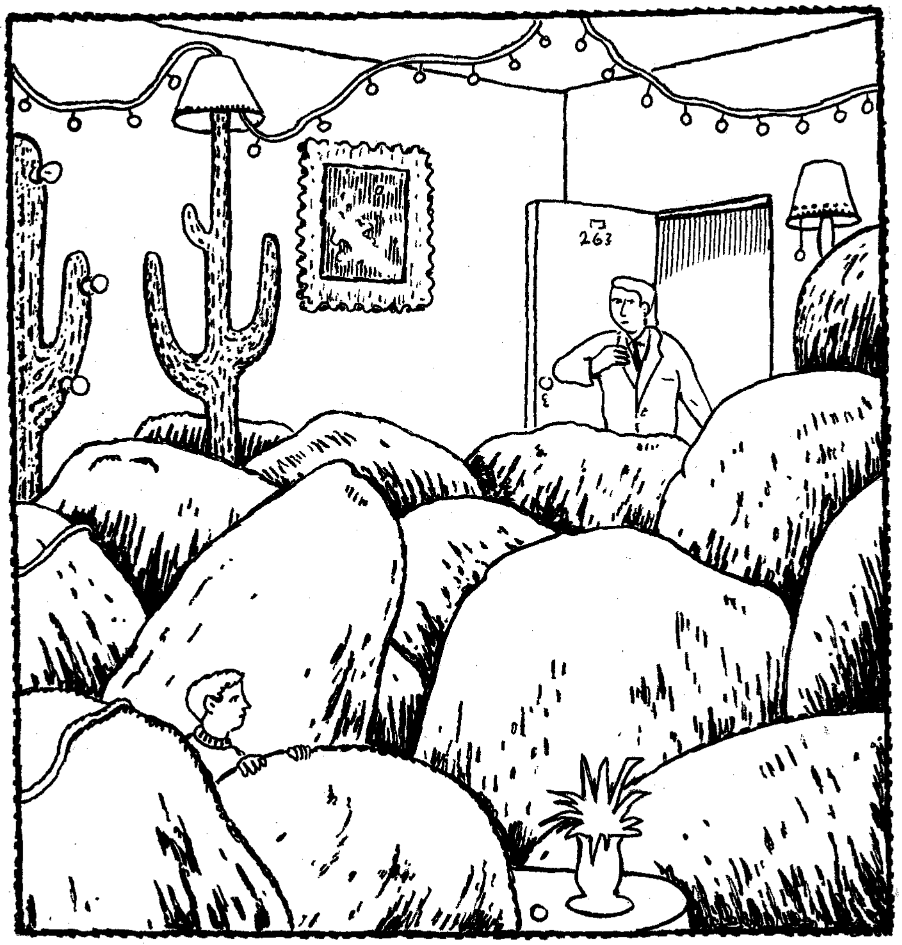
What the world saw through the embeds was a blitzkrieg of American force, viewed from the turret of an M1 tank as it roared through the desert, unchallenged and seemingly unchallengeable. The veteran ABC News anchor Ted Koppel gamely captured the thrill of the dash to Baghdad with the 3rd Infantry Division, and was moved to paraphrase Shakespeare: "Wreak havoc and unleash the dogs of war!" But he recognized the limits of the view he was getting. During a live broadcast, when Peter Jennings asked him about the broader progress of the war, Koppel replied, "Let's be perfectly candid about this. We get much of our news either when we chat with you or when we listen . . . to the BBC on shortwave on the hour." The drawing of the larger picture of the war was left not to the commanding general, as had been the case in Desert Storm, but to Donald Rumsfeld and the Pentagon.

As for Tommy Franks, his public role was in the custody of Jim Wilkinson, a thirty-two-year-old transfer from the White House Office of Communications. When I met Wilkinson last winter at CENTCOM's permanent headquarters, in Tampa, he had the distracted look of an overtaxed student at exam time—nails bitten to the quick, his shirttail hanging out of his unpressed trousers, one hand nervously twirling a pen. When I next saw him, in Qatar, he was in full desert-battle dress, his thick brush of red hair cut short in the military style, and with the bearing of a man in charge of important things. Although he was a civilian with a junior officer's rank (lieutenant) in the naval reserve, at CENTCOM he was given a civilian rank equal to that of a two-star general. Wilkinson had come to his job at CENTCOM, which bore the lofty title "director of strategic communications," after soldiering as a partisan for the Republican Party. He entered politics on the rebound from disappointment in his first ambition: to be an undertaker. In 1992, he walked into the office of his congressional representative, the Republican House leader, Dick Armey, and talked his way into a job.

Wilkinson eventually became Armey's "oppo man," charged with finding Democratic vulnerabilities and feeding them to the press. It was Wilkinson who seized upon Al Gore's claim to early support for the Internet and spun it into damaging braggadocio. He moved up to the national Republican Party, and worked the disputed Presidential-election results in Florida.

At CENTCOM, Wilkinson accompanied Franks virtually everywhere, including the Commander's visits to the regional heads of state. It was not part of his job to make Franks accessible to the press, which was just fine with Franks; after his first appearance, on the third day of the war, Franks briefed reporters only twice.

Franks's friends and colleagues portray a man considerably more colorful than the stiff professional who in public seems to talk only in military-speak. Franks has a robust temper, and he swears like a ranch hand. He drinks salty margaritas, enjoys a good cigar, and bellows



SHARING AN APARTMENT WITH A CREATIVE-DESIGN VISIONARY WAS NOT WITHOUT ITS OCCASIONAL DRAWBACKS.

STILL MEMORY

The dream was so deep
the bed came unroped from its moorings,
drifted upstream till it found my old notch

in the house I grew up in,
then it locked in place.
A light in the hall—

my father in the doorway, not dead,
just home from the graveyard shift
smelling of crude oil and solvent.

In the kitchen, Mother rummages through silver
while the boiled water poured
in the battered old drip pot

unleashes coffee's smoky odor.
Outside, the mimosa fronds, closed all night,
open their narrow valleys for dew.

along with his beloved country-music tunes. He is not one of the military's deep thinkers—he spends his free time watching movies on his portable DVD player, his taste running to Eddie Murphy comedies. But he shouldn't be underestimated. "He is very quick," retired General Crosbie Saint, who commanded Franks when he was a lieutenant colonel on the rise, says. "When you talk to him, you can see the wheels going around." Franks loves to be among his soldiers, in whose company he easily assumes the unpolished manner of the enlisted class. On his first visit to the troops during the Iraq war, he collapsed formation and waded into the crowd, hugging the troops, praising their effort, and asking what he could do for them. "And don't be giving me any of this horseshit about 'putting me on a plane,'" he joked, to hearty approval. A digital camera was in nearly every soldier's rucksack, and when a soldier asked to take a picture Franks feigned modesty. "Why would anyone want a picture of me?" he asked. "I'm an old ugly son of a bitch."

Keeping Franks out of the news made it easier for the Office of Global Communications to achieve its purpose, which was to make the three thousand or so journalists who were stuck in Doha focus on the CENTCOM message: The fight to liberate Iraq from Saddam's evil regime was going exactly according to plan. The daily briefing chore fell mostly to a young African-American brigadier general, Vincent K. Brooks, who was cast in the role after a brief audition. Brooks and his brother Leo, who is also a brigadier general, are West Pointers—their father, Leo Brooks, Sr., was an Army brigadier general as well—and are considered rising stars in the Army. At CENTCOM headquarters, Vincent Brooks declined most requests for interviews, adhering to his role as the bearer of the daily message, delivered bloodlessly and beginning almost invariably as it did on the afternoon of March 27th: "Our plan is working, and we're one day closer to achieving our objectives."

By then, however, the relentlessly upbeat CENTCOM message was beginning to ring false. The giddy tone of the opening days of the invasion of Iraq began to give way by the end of the first week. The weekend of March 22nd brought the news that a British plane returning from a bombing mission over Iraq had been shot down by an American Patriot missile battery near the Kuwaiti border, killing all aboard. At around the same time came the grim, bizarre news of a fragging incident in the 101st Airborne Division, in central Kuwait. A sergeant had tossed three grenades into the command tent, killing two and wounding fourteen.

From the battlefield, a stream of reports suggested that things were not going according to plan. The cities of Umm Qasr, Basra, and Nasiriya, which had been declared "quelled" and "controlled" and "secured" just the day before, were now the scenes of sharp fighting. The coalition had hoped, even expected, that the Shia Muslims in the south would rise up, turn against the regime, and join the liberation forces. Instead, all through the south of Iraq, coalition forces were suddenly under attack. In the first two days of the war, there had been reports of broad Iraqi Army surrenders, which the coalition was firmly counting on; plans for postwar Iraq were based partly on using the Iraqi Army to help secure the country. But the mass capitulation never came. The Iraqi regulars either fought—often at the point of a gun—or managed to melt away into the population.

The fiercest resistance came from enemy irregular forces—Baathist loyalists, foreign mercenaries, and jihadis—and detached Republican Guard fighters. These paramilitaries fought wildly, even madly, attacking armored American vehicles head on with small-arms volleys fired from Toyota pickup trucks. They stood no chance against the coalition forces, but the attacks were more than a mere annoyance. Fire from rocket-propelled grenade launchers managed to knock out four Abrams M1 tanks—vehicles designed to survive direct confrontations with Soviet formations. Coalition commanders seemed surprised and confused by the attacks. "The *truth* of the matter is it's difficult for us to understand completely who all is operating in these various actions," a CENTCOM commander conceded.

In Baghdad, the coalition's strategic air campaign, the famous Shock and Awe bombardment, was beginning to look like a fizzle. It had not only failed to incite an immediate capitulation; it had failed even to shut down Iraqi broadcast operations. Iraqi television showed tapes of Saddam Hussein appealing to world

Around us, the town is just growing animate,
its pulleys and levers set in motion.
My house starts to throb in its old socket.

My twelve-year-old sister steps fast
because the bathroom tiles
are cold and we have no heat other

than what our bodies can carry.
My parents are not yet born each
into a small urn of ash.

My ten-year-old hand reaches
for a pen to record it all
as would become long habit.

—*Mary Karr*

opinion ("We have seen how Bush, the mean one, has taken lightly your stance and opinions") and broadcast the daily taunts of the Information Minister, Muhammad Said al-Sahhaf ("Our initial assessment is that they will all die").

The coalition's long, exposed supply line was now being randomly attacked by the Iraqi irregulars. Franks's plan had left out the armored cavalry units that many believed would be necessary to protect the force's rear. On Sunday, March 23rd, a convoy of mechanics from the 507th Maintenance Company, a follow-on unit, made a wrong turn and was ambushed. A dozen U.S. soldiers were captured or killed. Arab television broadcast gruesome images of the dead, and showed frightened American prisoners of war—including Specialist Shoshana Johnson, a cook with the unit—being roughly questioned by their captors.

On that same Sunday night, the Army's 11th Aviation Regiment, a deep-strike force of Apache helicopters equipped with Hellfire missiles, prepared for its first assault on a Republican Guard armored formation. A unit such as the 11th had been believed capable of taking out an entire brigade of enemy armor, but as the Apaches swooped toward their objective they were met with an onslaught of fire—mostly from handheld small arms fired into the night sky. One of the Apaches was brought down and its two pilots taken prisoner; the rest aborted the mission and returned to base so damaged that the regiment was declared un-airworthy.

From the battlefield to the Coalition Media Center, in Qatar, and even in Washington, the mood had turned. "It's clear that this war is no cakewalk," the NBC Pentagon correspondent began his report that Sunday morning. "The war stumbles after a fast start."

Soon afterward, CENTCOM's information operation, changing tactics, invited a group of reporters to a background briefing with a senior commander, who found it necessary to assert that the coalition was not going to quit. "We are prepared to pay a very high price, because we are not going to do anything other than insure that this regime goes away," he said. "And if that means there'll be a lot of casualties then there'll be a lot of casualties. But we're not gonna walk away from this thing."

On Monday, March 24th, the winds began, a fierce, near-hurricane-force blow that darkened the Iraqi sky for three days. The picture from embedded television correspondents instantly darkened, and now depicted an Army standing still, its great machines fouled by driven sand. With no forward movement to report, journalists found stories about strains on the two-hundred-and-fifty-mile-long supply line—one Marine unit was reportedly down to a single meal a day. Soldiers in the field began to question the soundness of the mission.

On Thursday, March 27th, Washington awakened to an astonishing front-page report in the *Post*, which said that "some senior U.S. military officers are now convinced that the war is likely to last months and will require considerably more combat power."

After one week, the war was edging toward quagmire status in the commentariat. Then, in what would become one of the most cited comments of the war, Lieutenant General William S. Wallace, commander of the Army's V Corps, was quoted by the *Times*' Jim Dwyer as saying, "The enemy we're fighting is a bit different than the one we war-gamed against because of these paramilitary forces." That statement was taken as proof of the war plan's inadequacy, and it inspired people who had opposed the war, or at least the war plan, to abandon restraint. "They thought they would be greeted as liberators and that the regime would collapse like a house of cards," President Jacques Chirac, of France, said. "But they underestimated Iraqi patriotism. They would have been better off listening to us."

"That's what I was trying to warn them about two years ago," former Senator Gary Hart said, referring to his 2001 assertion that, in projecting an Iraqi war, one must assume "several tens of thousands of American casualties and hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties in downtown Baghdad."

General Franks delayed the assault on Baghdad, which had been planned for the weekend of March 29th. And he ordered Jim Wilkinson to remind field commanders that, when talking to reporters, they need to "stay in their lanes." But it was too late for message control. The weather delay became an "operational pause," welcomed by many of the Old Army loyalists, who saw a chance to repudiate the obviously discredited Rumsfeld plan, to regroup, and effectively to start the war over again. Evaluating the war as expert commentators on television, the retired officers were withering in their criticism.

"Their assumptions were wrong," retired General Barry McCaffrey, who became the voice of Old Guard remon-

Victoria Roberts

"I'm treating you like a living deity for one day."

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strance, said. McCaffrey had been a star commander in the first Gulf War, described by Norman Schwarzkopf as "the most aggressive and successful ground commander of the war." Now his disagreement with the war plan came across as genuine anger at Rumsfeld. "At the end of the day, the question arises: Why would you do this operation with inadequate power? Because you didn't have time to get them there? But we did. Because you don't have the forces? But we did. Because you're trying to save money on a military operation that will be two hundred billion dollars before it's done? Or is it because you have such a strong ideological view and you're so confident in your views that you disregard the vehement military advice from, particularly, Army generals who you don't think are very bright?"

Two weeks before the war, Rumsfeld had been asked at a Pentagon press briefing whether he could promise the American people that the war wouldn't become a quagmire. "I can almost promise you that someone in this room will *say* it's a quagmire," he had replied. That day had arrived, much sooner than even Rumsfeld could have guessed. He and Myers worked damage control on the Sunday news broadcasts. Their joint Pentagon press briefing two days later was remarkable for its contentiousness, with Myers uncharacteristically lashing out at former comrades now serving as commentators, calling their remarks "bogus." And Rumsfeld, discussing his input into the war plan, even asserted, almost plaintively, "It was not my plan—it was General Franks's plan."

No commander had ever before fought a war under quite the circumstances facing Franks, with real-time, around-the-clock coverage and instantaneous peer review. Looking back, Franks admits to only faint annoyance at some of the harsher pronouncements that were made as the war unfolded. "There are a couple of differences between critics and people who actually have the job on the ground," he says. "And one of the differences is that the critics are not accountable to anyone for anything. They simply state an opinion. I think there is a much more important comment that I could make on the critics, or pundits—and that is, they don't know the plan."

The rear-line attacks from the irregulars, which had seemed so threatening at the end of the first week of the war, suggesting to some a long, painful counterinsurgency, amounted, in the end, to little more than minor skirmishes. "They'd come to the conclusion that if you put a bunch of guys in the back of a pickup truck, you arm the pickup truck with a machine gun, and you fling it at Americans, you're bound to cause some casualties," Lieutenant General John Abizaid, Franks's top deputy in Qatar, told me. "But when you look at the casualty figures from that part of the campaign they're really not that high. But they were psychologically important."

Of more concern to Franks was what lay ahead—the battle for Baghdad. Between the capital city and the Army's 3rd Infantry Division stood the Medina Division of the Iraqi Republican Guard, promising the first, and possibly decisive, major set-piece battle of the war. During the pause in fighting, the Iraqis had moved heavy divisions out of the north to help defend Baghdad from a southern approach, and had added force to the Medina Division. It was suggested that Franks do the same—use the operational pause to reinforce his troops. Franks bristles at the notion that there even was an operational pause. "Actually, it was really more of a sandstorm than it was a pause," he says. "And I'm really not defensive about this thing. We had, I guess, three or four days' worth of really bad weather in this." The storm, Franks says, stopped him only from softening the Iraqi formations with his ground forces. "We did not have enough visibility to be able to kill the targets using ground systems, and so we opted to use G.P.S. air systems"—satellite-guided precision bombs—"during this period of time," he says. Franks ordered a massive, relentless air attack on Iraqi positions—a thousand sorties a day, flown by Air Force, Navy, and Marine aircraft. During one run, coalition forces dropped eighty five-hundred-pound bombs on an Iraqi armored brigade.

Because of the sandstorm, CENTCOM could not be certain what effect the bombardment was having; the satellite photographs were not clear. The air strikes continued for several days during the week of March 24th, and the storm forced Franks to push back the assault on Baghdad by at least three days.

Proponents of more force continued to urge Franks to wait for reinforcements. Joseph L. Galloway, a respected military correspondent with strong ties to the Army establishment (he is a co-author of the Vietnam saga "We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young"), wrote an article for the Knight Ridder newspaper chain quoting a senior officer who was virtually pleading with Franks not to press forward. "I hope [Franks] won't do this," the officer said. "He should stand on the perimeter and grind them down. He has got to bring the 4th Division in to do this. He can't do it with what he's got." The issue was debated inside Franks's briefing room at CENTCOM and, on Saturday, March 29th, during a video teleconference with the President, who was at Camp David. With the President's acquiescence, Franks decided to push ahead.

That weekend, the battle-damage pictures began to come in clearly, and what Franks and his commanders saw astonished them. The Medina Division, which the coalition had hoped to degrade by fifty per cent, was down to less than twenty-five per cent of its fighting force, and its support divisions were nearly destroyed. "They didn't just destroy them a little bit," Abizaid told me, after assessing the battle-damage reports. "They were obliterated in a way that's fairly significant in military terms."

It was perhaps the war's most vivid display of the disparity between American and Iraqi military capability. To the air crews dropping the precision weapons in run after run, bombing became such a matter of routine that one pilot, who called himself Captain Steve, passed along to an online "warblog" called The Command Post haikus written by crew members looking to kill the tedium:

> Republican Guard
> Accustomed to all power
> Now just a pink mist.

But Baghdad still lay ahead, and geography favored the Iraqis. To reach the approach to Baghdad, the Army's 3rd Infantry Division would have to squeeze through the Karbala Gap—a sandy lowland, just twenty-five miles wide. On one side of the gap lay Lake Buhayrat ar Razazah, and on the other the Euphrates River. Once through, the Americans would be only fifty miles from Baghdad.

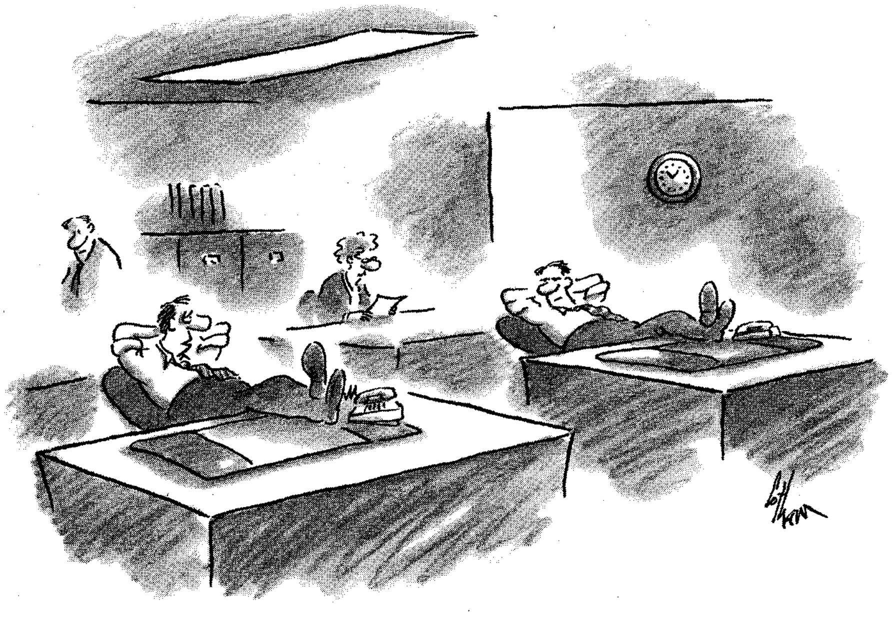
To "shoot the gap," as Franks puts it, his ground commanders devised a maneuver that involved feinting a head-on attack against the Medina Division, to fix the Iraqis in place, while sending the bulk of the 3rd Infantry Division along the edge of the lake and through the Karbala Gap. On the other side of the battle zone, in the east, the Marines would also feint toward Baghdad, forcing the Medina Division to pay attention to possible assault from two sides. "And then, once the Medina was fixed in the center," Franks says, "the 3rd I.D. shot the gap over on the left."

The move worked impressively, and the 3rd Infantry rumbled through the gap almost without resistance, suffering just a single casualty. "All of that was made possible by airpower," Franks says.

By Tuesday, April 1st—the same day that Rumsfeld and Myers were defending the war plan in a heated Pentagon press briefing—coalition forces had reached what Franks and his commanders called "the tipping point" of the war. The first sign came that night, with a stunning victory on the public-relations front. With commanders at headquarters watching in real time, a commando team swept into an Iraqi hospital and rescued an Army private, Jessica Lynch, who had been held under guard there. The next morning, Franks, who had slept through the event, walked into his briefing room at CENTCOM and found his subordinates in a celebratory mood. "You guys act like you're surprised," he scolded. "Our Special Operations forces are the best in the world. Of course they did it." Even so, CENTCOM played it for all it was worth. The information team prepared a video showing the rescue ("The best-produced thirty-second spot you'll see," one information officer said) and let the word out to the television networks that the tape might be available. At the next afternoon's CENTCOM press briefing, General Brooks went through his opening spiel, and then opened the floor to questions, without mentioning the rescue. On cue, CNN's correspondent asked about the tape. Brooks, feigning ignorance, in a stage aside, asked his colleagues, "Do we have the tape?" Although it was subsequently learned that the Baathist guards had fled the compound just before the raid, at the time the Lynch rescue was the tipping point in the message war, muting the skeptical tone of the campaign's second week.

Two days later, the 7th Cavalry Regiment secured the Baghdad airport, and again Franks was urged by press commentators to hold off on a final assault on the city. The 4th Infantry Division, the main backup force coming into the country, wouldn't be battle-ready for at least another two weeks. CENTCOM had anticipated that the Iraqis would try a layered defense of the city. "You've got regular formations, Republican Guard formations on the outskirts of Baghdad, and then you still may have the same sort of types—militia, other Republican Guards, infantry units, et cetera—that may already be in the city, defending the city," a CENTCOM commander said.

In a sense, the long, bitter argument over the war plan and the size of the coali-

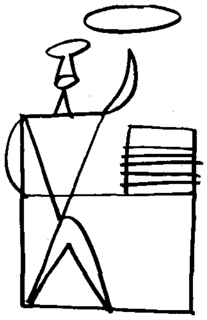


"So, do you come here often?"

tion force came down to this moment. Waiting for the heavy 4th Infantry Division would have reduced risk and put more troops inside Baghdad to help stabilize the country when combat ended. General Shinseki had earned a sharp rebuke from Rumsfeld's team for his suggestion, based partly upon his own command of the American peacekeeping force in Bosnia, that "several hundred thousand" troops would be needed to secure a postwar Iraq. But part of the reason that Franks had fashioned a war plan featuring a quick dash to Baghdad was to avoid what one CENTCOM war planner called the "fortress Baghdad" scenario. If the American forces could take the city quickly enough, Franks reasoned, the Iraqis wouldn't have time to dig in and mount their layered defense. Franks decided to push ahead.

On the weekend of April 5th, Franks ordered two armored battalions of the 3rd Infantry Division into the heart of the city. They met resistance, but it was mostly from disorganized fragments of the Iraqi regulars and foreign volunteers. An estimated three thousand of them were killed during the raids. "To do a raid like that unhinges the other guy, but you also find out what he's got," General Peter Pace says. "And when they went through they killed everything that got anywhere near them, which also sent a message to the Iraqis." Whatever organized defense of Baghdad the Iraqis had planned quickly folded, and three days later Saddam's statue in Firdos Square came down.

I asked Franks why taking Baghdad had been so easy—why Saddam hadn't staged a fighting retreat from the Kuwaiti border, blowing bridges and torching oil fields as his forces pulled back into Baghdad; why he hadn't made the fortified last stand that they'd so feared; why the Iraqis hadn't used weapons of mass destruction.



"We had, by way of intelligence, a pretty good sense of where all the enemy's formations are," he replied. "We certainly don't know where all the little people are, but we do know where all the big equipment is. So if you have a sense of where that is, and where the enemy happens to be sitting, if you like where they're sitting, then you simply plan to aggregate smaller, friendly forces at specific points against the enemy. And you want to do that in a way that takes you to the heart of it. And that is the business of decision cycles, or inside the decision loop, as people say. If you figure out that an enemy has a certain number of trucks with which he can move his heavy equipment a certain number of miles at a certain rate, and you figure out that you can get inside his ability to react, and if, in fact, you can deceive him with respect to what you are going to do, to cause him further confusion and make him keep his force in place one day too long, then, in fact, you find yourself all the way to Baghdad."

The three-week war had been an overmatch of historic proportions—the very "cakewalk" that Administration hawks had predicted. There had been remarkably light casualties—fewer than a hundred and fifty American deaths during the combat phase—and the Iraqi oil fields and most of the country's heavy infrastructure had been saved.

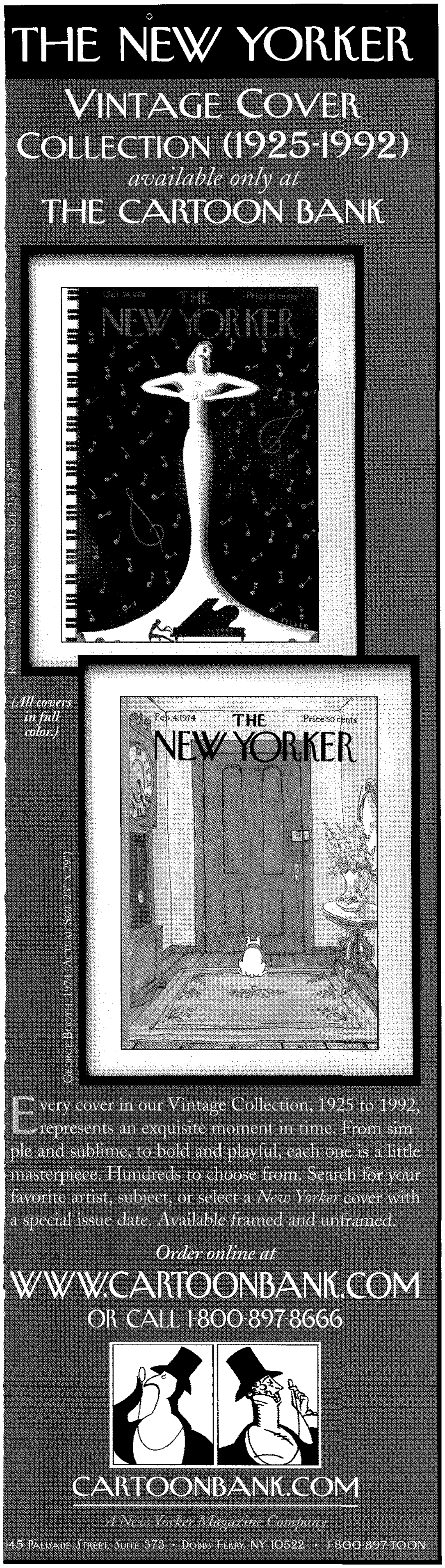
From a war-fighting perspective, Franks believes that the war in Iraq, taken together with the war in Afghanistan, validates Rumsfeld's ideas about the transformation of the American military. As combatant commander, Franks relied heavily upon Special Forces, using them essentially to replace an entire division in the west of Iraq and in the north, where the coalition had to fight without the 4th Infantry Division. When the 173rd Airborne Brigade was dropped into the north at the end of the first week of the war, it was put under the command of the Special Forces—a rarity, if not a first, for conventional forces. "That's kind of like a Navy SEAL being in charge of a carrier battle group," General Keane says.

"I think there are some lessons that are enduring," Franks says. "We certainly have become believers in precision. We're certainly believers in unmanned aerial systems. What I think this confirmed for all of us is the value of training in the joint, combined, and interagency world. That is transformational. If you ask yourself, 'What are the real takeaways from this that are transformational? Where do we want to go in the future,' that"—joint fighting—"is probably the largest lesson of all." Franks also believes that the war should teach the Army a lesson about "flattening" its "command-and-control organizations"—an argument for allowing more initiative to officers in the field, which is one of the fundamental tenets of the military reformers.

The Rumsfeld way of war, it seemed, had been wholly validated. Rumsfeld himself suggested as much when he took a victory tour of the war zone at the end of April, telling the command staff and troops in Qatar, "From this experience, our experience in Afghanistan as well, we're learning lessons that will affect how the United States of America, how the Department of Defense and the services, will organize, will train, and will equip, lessons that will impact budgets and procedures, training and doctrine, and affect the future success of our country for many years to come."

Triumphant, Rumsfeld now had the chance to make a clean sweep of the Army's top leadership. He forced the resignation of Army Secretary Thomas E. White, who had been a close ally of General Shinseki. Shinseki's own term as Chief of Staff ended this month. Rumsfeld chose as their replacements men who will very likely embrace his vision and accelerate his transformation. As Army Chief of Staff, Rumsfeld recommended retired General Peter J. Schoomaker, who is the former head of the Special Operations Command. (Keane, the heir apparent, declined the position for personal reasons.) Rumsfeld's choice for the new Army Secretary is someone from outside the Army altogether: James G. Roche, a former Navy officer who is currently the Secretary of the Air Force. No one in the Army will mistake the message in these appointments. General Abizaid, the Army's highest-ranking Arab-American and a favorite of Rumsfeld, has been nominated to succeed Franks at CENTCOM.

The Iraq campaign proved that Rumsfeld is already very close to having the military that he wants—one that can move quickly and with devastating effect. That utility is inherently emboldening, as the rest of the world has noted to its dismay, and is perfectly suited to the Bush doctrine of preëmptive military action when and where America perceives a potential threat. But the Iraq campaign also points up a paradox of the new way of war. A smaller, faster, more lethal American military may be designed to achieve quick victories over foes who are unable, or un-



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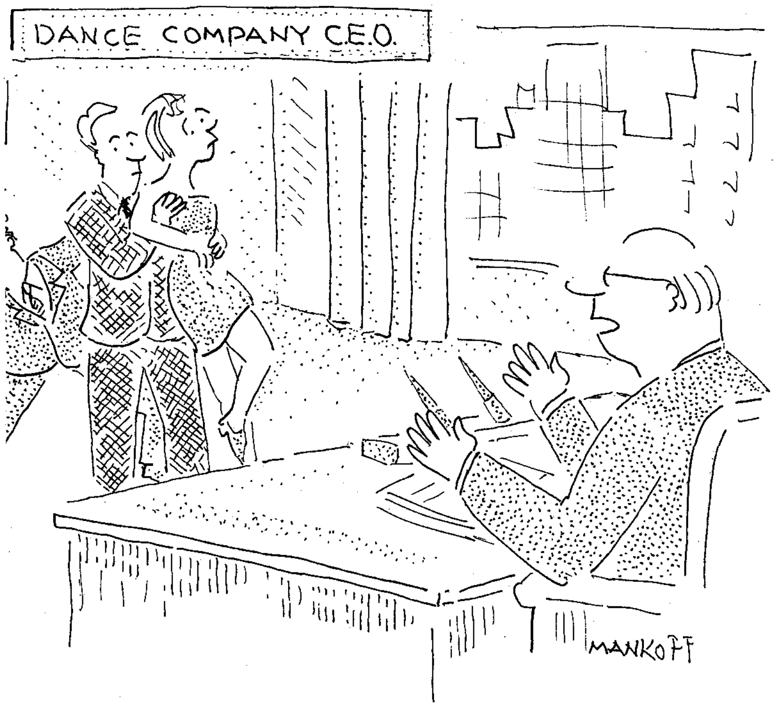

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says that he came to his own peace with Rumsfeld. "As it turns out, I happen to not only respect him—I like him," he says. "Some people don't. I do." When Rumsfeld visited CENTCOM headquarters in Qatar during his victory tour, one officer asked, "What was the hardest leadership decision that you had to make in the beginning of this campaign?" "Well, I'll tell you," Rumsfeld answered. "The best decision I made was asking General Tommy Franks."

During his tour of the war zone, Rumsfeld offered the Army's top job to Franks. It was, for Franks, a chance to become a truly pivotal military figure, presiding over, and perhaps moderating, his beloved institution's remaking. Franks, who once said, "I don't do politics," has maneuvered quite ably through the tricky politics of the terror wars. He saved his own job, found accommodation with Rumsfeld, and won two wars on the battlefield. And then, in his response to Rumsfeld's offer, he managed to avoid the messy aftermath of the war, both in Iraq and in the Pentagon. When I asked him whether he would be going to Washington, he seemed to be suppressing a laugh. He said, "I'm going to go—I'm going to go hunt quail." ♦

PROFILES

BECOMING THE HULK

Ang Lee finds that he and his monster have something in common.

BY JOHN LAHR

From last October until the end of May, the director Ang Lee was holed up at George Lucas's Industrial Light + Magic, in San Rafael, eleven miles north of San Francisco, working fifteen hours a day with the eponymous star of his eighth film, "The Hulk." Even by superstar standards, the Hulk is exceptional. He is green and, at the height of his powers, stands about fifteen feet tall. He is also completely computer-generated. The challenge for Lee's three-hundred-person visual-effects team was to make the Hulk sufficiently real so that he could coexist on an imaginative level with the movie's flesh-and-blood stars, Nick Nolte, Jennifer Connelly, and Eric Bana. The challenge for Lee himself was to marry his art-house sensibility to the vigorish of a Hollywood summer blockbuster—the first he's attempted. Behind Lee's desk at his temporary office in San Rafael hung a framed birthday card from the Hulk's creators, Marvel Comics. At the top of the card was a drawing of Lee's unassuming, puckish face with its cap of black hair. "Hulk, you're making me angry. You won't like me when I'm angry," Lee said in a cartoon bubble, repeating the character's famous mantra. Below, the Hulk, with his familiar jutting forehead and a square jaw that made him look like a tinted Bronko Nagurski, complained, "Hulk not understand motivation."

In his comic-book incarnation, the Hulk had little in the way of motivation. Unlike other superheroes, who are agents for good, the Hulk was conceived as a mutant. Part Gargantua and part Green Man, he could not control his power, which, in any case, was neither good nor intelligent; he simply raged when provoked, smashing his world to smithereens. A rampaging manifestation of self-destructiveness, he was a danger to his sane, buttoned-down other half, Bruce Banner, and even to himself. The character was born in 1962 and came of age in the mid-sixties, when the idea of protean transformation fuelled the drug culture and the rock-and-roll revolution—a fantasy of escape from the oppressiveness of the Vietnam War. Hounded, bewildered, strong beyond his ability to calculate, at once a menace and a marvel, the Hulk was the ultimate adolescent daydream. He was as confused as the next man, but more devastating. Onscreen, however, Lee has given the Hulk psychological depth; he has reimagined the Hulk's history as part of the universal struggle between patriarchy, repression, and desire, which Lee has spent much of his career exploring. "Everyone has a Hulk inside," Lee has written, "and each of our Hulks is both scary and potentially pleasurable. In fact, it's the pleasure that's the scariest thing of all."

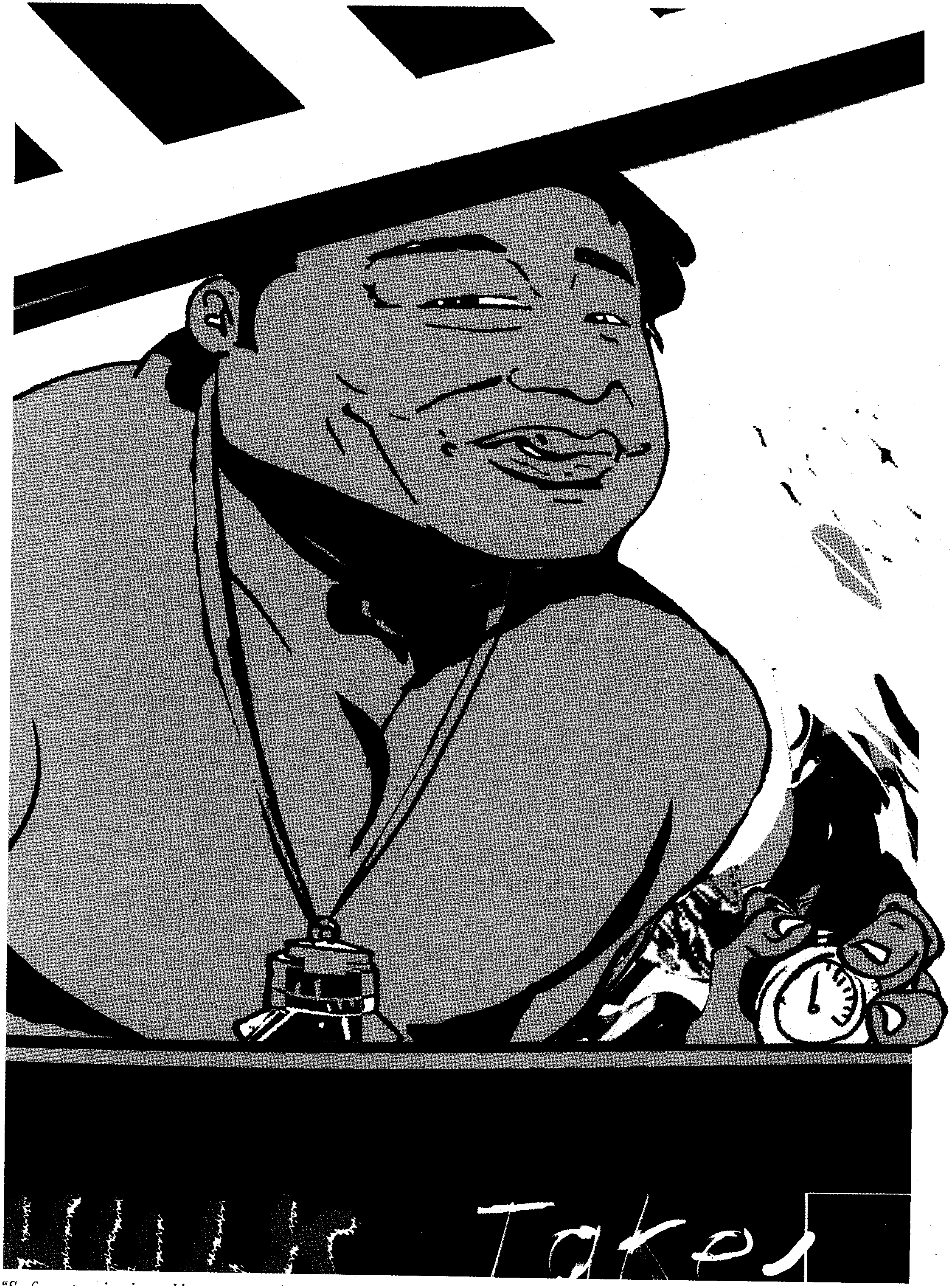
At first glance, it's hard to imagine a Hulk inside Ang Lee. He is, by Hollywood standards, sensationally calm and self-effacing. Short and wiry, with slightly hunched shoulders, he meets the world, as Nick Nolte says, "with a smile and that gentleness coming at you." Even Lee's wife, Jane Lin, a cell biologist at New York Medical College, says, "He has never lost his temper, really. We could never have an argument." Western drama is built on the escalation of tension; Chinese life is built around the reduction of it. Lee is a curious amalgam of both influences. The Chinese have no word for "individualism," and Lee, who is now forty-eight, says that he didn't even think of himself as an adult until the success of his film version of Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility," in 1995, and he didn't see himself as "Ang Lee, director" until the release, five years later, of the sleeper hit "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"—the highest-grossing foreign film ever made and the first Chinese movie to win an international audience.

Because Lee doesn't exude any of the imperialism of self associated with most directors of his stature, he is sometimes difficult to read. Ted Hope, who was a producer of Lee's first three movies—"Pushing Hands" (1992), "The Wedding Banquet" (1993), and "Eat Drink Man Woman" (1994)—quickly discovered that "part of the role I had was getting Ang to say no." Hope remembers looking over at Lee during the filming of a scene in "Pushing Hands": "He was clearly unhappy. I asked him what was the matter. 'The dress.' 'It's a brown dress. You said you liked the brown dress.' 'Yes, I liked the brown dress.' 'Then what's the matter?' He goes, 'Well, I liked the blue dress more.' 'Why didn't you say that?' Ang said, 'Well, you just asked me if I liked the brown dress.' "

Lee doesn't hector; he doesn't bluster; he doesn't insist on his own superiority; and he's not materialistic. He still drives his first car—a 1995 Mercury minivan—prefers sweatsuits, jeans, and sneakers to more elegant attire, and lived, until 1997, in an eight-hundred-and-twenty-five-square-foot three-room apartment in White Plains, New York, where he and his wife slept in the same room as their two sons. (He now lives in Mamaroneck, in a four-bedroom house with seven rare breeds of chickens at the bottom of his garden.) In fact, there is nothing conspicuous about Lee's behavior but his talent. "He has the most quiet footprint, a tremendous humility," Hope says. "He once said to me, describing his process, that movies pass through him."

Still, because Lee likes to find his films as he is making them, he requires from others a special quality of collaboration and from himself a special quality of attention. "Ang is as concentrated as any director I've ever worked with," Nolte says. "He keeps the actor constantly churning. Ang always wants to go beyond and find something new." Emma Thompson, who starred in "Sense and Sensibility," explains, "The quality of listening makes you want to do your

ISTVAN BANYAI



"So far, repression is my biggest source of creativity," Lee says. "Repression—release. Repression—acceleration. That's a good story."

"I woke up in a tattoo parlor in Tijuana. You can imagine my surprise."

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best to surprise him, because he's allowing you that space. It's the silent equivalent of somebody like Robert De Niro, whose mumbling makes one lean forward. You don't necessarily see this great intelligence on the surface, but as soon as you come toward it you receive the strength. Ang could always throw us off balance physically, as well as with his words. That's what all creative people need. They need to be pushed off their runnels."

When Lee first met with Nolte to persuade him to play the overreaching scientist David Banner—who murders his wife and turns his son, Bruce, into a literal extension of his own Faustian power—Nolte asked Lee why he wanted to make the movie. "He said, 'I can't make a comic book, but I can make a tragedy,'" Nolte recalls. Lee sees the Hulk as an embodiment of "the unconscious—it doesn't have a logic." He says, "The Hulk is the aggression and the fear and the unknown drive you have in life, which are hiding in the dark, which are not how you want to see yourself." In Lee's case, those turbulent forces translate into only one thing: filmmaking, which he calls "my devil side." For Lee, the making of movies is at once a thrill and a danger, an unsettling explosion of energy, in which greatness and goodness are always at odds. The enterprise tempts him away from normal life and from his family, in pursuit of his own selfish fantasies. It imposes a brutalizing loneliness; it also transforms him into a dictatorial person whose behavior he otherwise would not recognize. In this sense, he says, "The Hulk" has allowed him to visualize his alter ego. "Creativity is the hidden inside—the beast," he says. "To me, the whole process of making the movie is a process of Hulking-out. Any stretch is unnatural. It's nasty because to grow muscle you have to break old muscle. To reach something bigger than who I am, sometimes I cause pain and injury. And I have to hurt myself. It's like Hell. I felt on the verge of exploding—going through a depression—just to reach something. That to me is the experience of 'The Hulk.'" Lee, who in daily life doesn't have "a risk-taking bone in my body," adds, "It's scary, but if I don't touch that scary part I don't feel I'm doing my best. I don't think people should pay their ten bucks to see my worst."

"The Hulk," which has a novel approach to continuity editing and an ingenious multi-panel mode of storytelling, is a significant stylistic stretch for Lee. According to James Schamus, the co-president of Focus Features, who wrote the screenplay for "The Hulk" and has collaborated with Lee on six other screenplays, it is "probably the most technologically ambitious movie ever made." Although the split screen is not news to movies, no previous commercial film has attempted so complex an orchestration of panels that are simultaneously telling its story. The screen becomes a jigsaw, an effect that wittily replicates the comic-book experience. Images emerge, splinter, and dissolve, and these narrative fragments both drive the plot forward and generate tension. "You see both sides without intercutting," Lee says. "It allows the actor to breathe and to perform undisturbed by editing."

Lee, who is often described as a master of genres, is actually a mixer of them. In "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," for instance, he combined the lighthearted sensibility of kung-fu movies with the more reflective Taoist way. In "The Hulk," he plays a similar game with American culture. The film is a cinematic equivalent of three-card monte—a brazen act of prestidigitation, able to get away with much more than first meets the eye. Lee is creating both "kick-ass action" and art; he is merging the intellectual depth of drama and the surface sensationalism of cartoons; he is attempting to make both a myth and a bundle, or, as he puts it, "a delicacy of fast food."

In Lee's office, the influences that he was trying to merge onscreen faced each other from opposite walls. On one side were some of the inspirations for his cinematic palette: de Chirico for the colors and shapes of the Southwest, where part of the movie is set; Maxfield Parrish for the sky tones; Rousseau and the Hudson River School painters for the sense of scale; Picasso's Dora for the montage of tension; and Cézanne for everything else. On the other side, interspersed with moody comic-strip panels, were the swirling patterns of William Morris and Jackson Pollock. "The internal look," Lee said, inspecting the amoeba-like shapes of the Morris pattern. "The Hulk made me want to work with scale. But what's happening to him is something dim and small. It's in his cells. I found that these paintings look a lot like molecular things and also they have a cosmic look."

Like the Hulk and Bruce Banner, Lee inhabits a world of physical and emotional contradiction: big-small, clumsy-masterly, outsider-insider. Taiwanese by birth, he has lived in the United States since 1978 but has never applied for citizenship. He sees himself as "watercress floating on the water—I don't feel deeply rooted anywhere." Filmmaking is, he says, his way of "anchoring myself to the world." Through his movies, he can take imaginative possession of the landscapes from which he feels detached. "I have to create that culture to own it," he says. "I try to make something that I don't really belong to and make it work. It's a process of planting myself into it." He adds, "I live in people's imaginations, not the land I'm standing on." In "Crouching Tiger," he invented the China he never knew; in "The Ice Storm" (1997), his adaptation of Rick Moody's portrait of suburban American anomie, he captured the era just prior to his arrival in the United States; in "Ride with the Devil" (1999), a Civil War saga about bushwhackers in Missouri, he explored the sources of Yankee imperialism as part of his effort, he says, "to transform myself as American." With "The Hulk," Lee has "planted" himself at the center of the pop-culture landscape, not only by making his first Hollywood studio movie but also by weaving his own body quite literally into its drama.

Twice a week for nine months, in sessions that lasted up to eight hours, Lee donned a body suit studded with sensors that allowed computers to read and catalogue his movements, and went through the arduous task of enacting the Hulk's every possible gesture and facial expression. Lee had begun by using other actors, but for key emotional moments he took over the job himself. The work had some side benefits. "I got to yell and let aggression out," Lee says. "It was very therapeutic." Frederick Elmes, his cinematographer, says, "Something inside him allowed him to let go. He would actually roar a little bit, look up at the ceiling and scream. There was one point when he did such a good job that the second take was sort of just for him, because it felt good."

When the Banners, Jr. and Sr., face off in the final ferocious battle of "The Hulk," what's at stake is the son's power. "I need your strength," David tells Bruce. "I gave you life, now you must give it back to me." Lee, of course, never dared to fight this way with his own father. "I belong to him," he says. "I am an extension of his life." Lee's father, Lee Sheng, the principal of Taiwan's distinguished Tianan First Senior High School, was thirty-seven, and by the standards of the times rather old, when his first son, Ang, was born, in 1954. (Lee has older twin sisters, Wen and Ren, who are accountants, and a younger brother, Khan, who is a film director and playwright in Taiwan.) Lee Sheng had been raised on the mainland as part of the landlord class, and was the only member of his family to survive the Maoist purges. He escaped to Taiwan and eventually married Shu Zwan Yang, an elementary-school teacher, but, Lee explains, "He felt very lonely. He had to start the Lee family again." He adds, "In his generation, there was a lot of insecurity, because they'd seen everything disappear and people get killed. He wanted me to be useful, respectable, do something solid."

The family had a cook, a gardener, and a housekeeper, so the main requirement of Lee's childhood was study. "In Chinese culture, the only way to rise above your class is through study," Lee says. "Everything is the book, the book, the book. I'm the creative type. How can I focus on a book, on what people tell me to do?" The absent-minded Lee sometimes forgot his school bag on the bus, and once at lunch, he recalls, "I was so spaced out I fell back in my chair, literally tipped over." Lee Sheng was a stern, didactic presence, whose household was built on the Confucian bulwark of filial duty. He generally took his meals with the family in silence. "He'd finish in five minutes and leave the table," Lee says. "You'd be praying he wouldn't talk. If he talks, it's about something you'd have to be worried about." According to Lee, his father had "a big temper." "I'd really get on his nerves," Lee says. "What would happen? A yell, a smack, whatever. I'd get scared. I'd behave. Then, after a while, I'd drift away again." He continues, "The way I grew up, you take orders until one day you're old enough to give orders. That's how it works. We don't communicate. We don't debate. We don't explain." Inevitably, in this climate of obedience and obligation—"There was no love of art or creativity, not to mention the entertainment business"—Lee grew up feeling "repressed, inert, shy." Bounded by his bedroom's blue walls and his window, which overlooked a bamboo chicken coop, he took refuge in kung-fu fantasies and directed adventure scenes in his head—scenes, he says, that never had "myself in action." On Saturdays, he occasionally saw movies. At one film about lovers who can't speak their feelings for fear of their fathers' disapproval, Lee recalls weeping so loudly "that the other people in the row, who had also been crying, would suddenly get quiet and wonder who was making the noise."

When Lee took his college-entrance exams, he says, he suffered a kind of psychological block. "I was too frightened, I think," he adds. "I almost blacked out." He failed, and then failed a second time. To this day, he has a recurring nightmare: "I always dream of taking some sort of maths exam. I wake up sweating." Afraid of failing the exam a third time and being forced to do his military service right away, Lee took up what his family considered the lowliest of nonacademic options. At eighteen, he entered the Art Academy of Taiwan, in Taipei, as an acting student. He had always seen himself as being like his mother, a perception with which his galled father seemed to agree. "She's very good-tempered, reliant, subordinate, and nervous," Lee says. But onstage, to his surprise, Lee was a different person. "I was actually good at it," he says. "I made sense. When I stood onstage, I felt very tall. I wasn't shy." He adds, "I got results. I was the best actor in the school. I won national prizes."

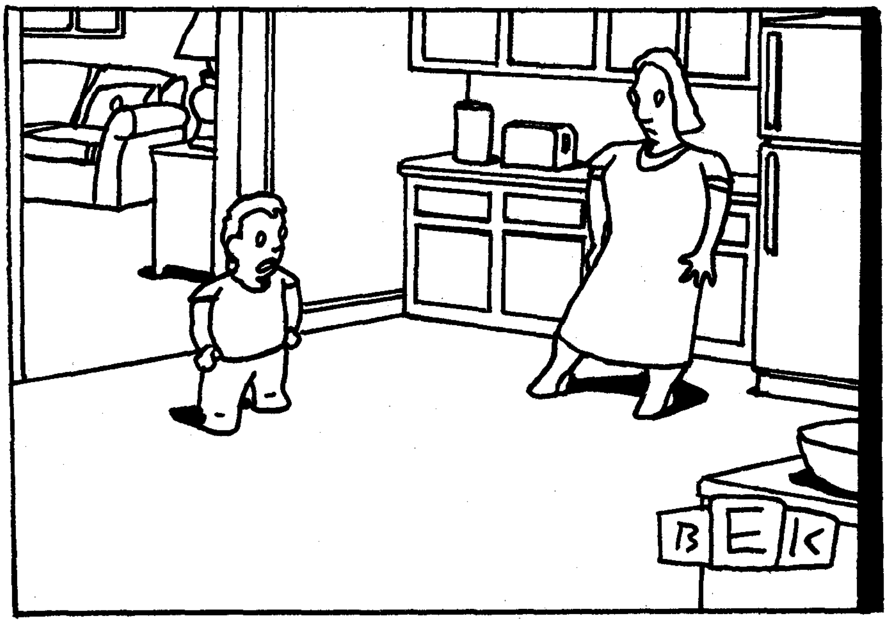
In 1978, Lee applied to the undergraduate theatre program at the University of Illinois and was accepted. (To convince his father of the wisdom of this move, he suggested that he would return to Taiwan as a professor, with "at least a master's degree.") But in America he soon discovered that his haphazard command of English was a major obstacle. "Every word I would check," he says. "It was quite painful. I would take ten hours to read a script that everyone else read in an hour." Lee realized that he wouldn't be able to act under these circumstances, and he switched to the directing program. He studied plays by Brecht, Pinter, O'Neill, and Tennessee Williams, whose words, he says, "talked back to me." He goes on, "I only understood about half of what was going on, but just the look of Western theatre struck me in a big way. You exert your feelings. You outcry. You use drama to do the bangs and through that purge your feelings. It was a big culture shock to me. You've got to verbalize conflict onstage. I got very good at it."

During his first week on campus, Lee went on an outing to a Little League game in Gary, Indiana, with a car full of Taiwanese exchange students. "They were from good colleges and doing science, agriculture, and medicine, and I was still a transfer undergrad in theatre, which is almost laughable," he remembers. On that bus, Lee met his future wife, Jane Lin, an independent, outspoken graduate student in microbiology (on whom Lee later based aspects of the fierce, intrepid character Yu Shu Lien in "Crouching Tiger"). "I never pursued a woman," Lee says. "She came and talked to me. She's a good listener, and she has the smallest ego of anybody I know. I was a shy guy, but I was a future director—I had that ego thing and I wanted to express it. I couldn't find anybody to listen to me. And there she was, interested in what I did." Lin also remembers their meeting. "I could be a chair. I could be a bucket of water. It doesn't matter, he just talks—about everything," she says. "I fall asleep, I wake up, he's still talking." Lin soon became Lee's primary source of emotional support. She remembers that, after directing a production of Ionesco's "The Chairs," in which the husband ended up sitting in his wife's lap, Lee would often sit in hers. "It was kind of a jest, but very comforting," says Lin, who is five feet four to Lee's five-seven. "I'm strong, and he used to be very, very skinny."

After two years at Illinois, Lee decided that he wanted to direct movies, not plays. In theatre, he felt, it was acting, not directing, that "carries the scene." Onscreen, however, the moving image could bridge the impasse of language. "I see making movies as a part of acting—both are about expressing yourself, exposing your inner feelings, provoking other people's emotions," he says. In his spare time at the academy in Taipei, Lee had made two Super-8 films, one an eighteen-minute silent movie about a kite, for which he was cameraman, director, and editor. "The editing machine was just a splicer. I had no viewer, so I estimated," he said. "It was quite innovative—it had a free style." Those films got him accepted, in 1980, at New York University's film school. "Things were much easier there," he says. "I was the top student right away." Lee's second-year student film won him a scholarship; his thesis, "Fine Line," a romantic caper about the clash of cultures in Little Italy and Chinatown, proved his ability to handle different genres (and featured the film début of Chazz Palminteri). Lee dismisses it now as "an exercise" in which he "didn't have anything to say." By the time he graduated, in 1984, he had come to the unhappy conclusion that "there was no way a Chinese speaker could make a movie in the States." As he recounts in Stephen Lowenstein's book "My First Movie":

> I decided to go back to Taiwan. . . . But before I went I wanted . . . at least to show the film ["Fine Line"] at the school's film festival. I realized later that it was a big deal because a lot of people were from outside film school and a lot of Asians were watching. Anyway, I was packing up all my stuff. . . . I got a phone call and they said, "This guy from William Morris is looking for you." And I said, "William who?" Anyway, an agent said, "Why don't you stay here . . . ?" "There's no way, I'm gone," I said. He said, "You'll be working, blah, blah, blah." The Hollywood type. The next day my film won the Best Picture and Best Director of that year. . . . And my baby was only a month old.

In 1983, Lin and Lee had decided to get married, for the benefit of Lee's father. "That was the year his father retired," Lin says. "Chinese always like to have double happiness." Lin's mother, however, was disappointed at the pros-



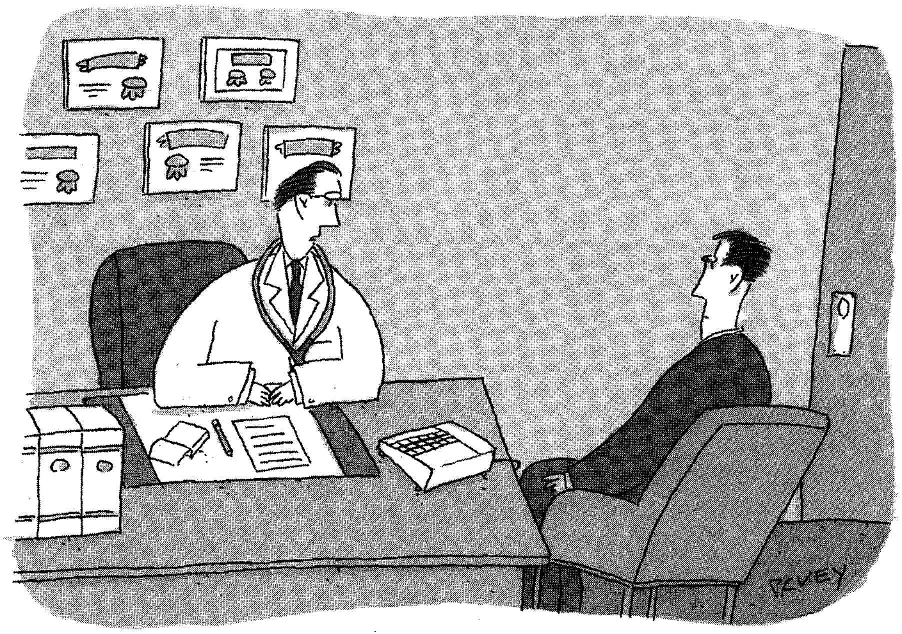
"Do you have any other snack concepts?"

pective match. “She said, ‘Why did you pick this one, with all the other nice boys around—engineering and regular people?’ ” Lin recalls. “I said, ‘I earn my own living. I can choose whoever I want.’ ” Lee worked two incidents from his wedding day into the comedy of “The Wedding Banquet”: the hasty, matter-of-fact ceremony at City Hall, and the drunken groom getting his new wife pregnant on their wedding night.

Their union, in the early years, proved to be a marriage of inconvenience. Haan was born in 1984. Lin, who had never even held a child before, struggled to care for him on her own and finish her Ph.D., while Lee, caught in development hell, shuttled between Illinois, New York, and Los Angeles. In 1986, the family went to stay with friends in Chappaqua so that they could be together while Lee was hunting for work in New York. But the situation was far from ideal. Their room was cold. They worried that they were disturbing their friends, who didn’t have children. “We felt trapped,” Lin says. Lee re-created that sense of isolation and tension in his first feature, “Pushing Hands,” in which a retired Tai Chi master, who was persecuted by the Red Guard, comes to live in his son’s suburban American home. “Let me tell you,” the father says to his son, whose American wife suffers her father-in-law’s cohabitation with palpable irritation, “compared to loneliness, persecution is nothing.” Every day, after Lin left for work at a lab in Valhalla, Lee walked a mile and a half to a tennis court in Pleasantville—“just to hit, hit, hit,” Lin says. “It was nothing to do with tennis.” When Lee went to the West Coast on one of his development junkets, Lin felt deserted; she briefly considered divorce.

In 1986, they finally got their own apartment, in White Plains—the first floor of a two-story mock-Colonial, looking out over a rolling sward of grass and a cluster of trees—and the surface of life improved. The family slept together in one bedroom; Lee wrote scripts in the other. In the evenings, they’d stroll through the neighborhood to a farmhouse where George Washington had stayed and from the plateau survey the sprawling ribbon of city traffic below. “We had a very simple life,” Lin says. “We were happy about little things.” But Lee could not get to the next step in his career. “At film school, we had experience of short films,” he says. “It took me years to realize that feature films—the structure, the character development—are a very different ballgame.” He wrote scripts and his agent got him work as a production assistant, but his attention to the details of other people’s movies was slipshod, and he was not rehired. Lin supported the family, while Lee became a sort of househusband. He played with his son. He cooked. He wrote occasional articles for Chinese newspapers. And he tried to decide what to do. “Everything had been turned down,” he told Stephen Lowenstein. “It was just awful. I pretty much sank to the bottom.” He explains, “If I’m not making a movie, I’m like a dead person. Jane basically let me be. She lived her own life, and if I went too crazy, and it looked like I was freaking out, she’d take me to Kentucky Fried Chicken”—one of his favorite places to eat. “All those sleepless nights,” Lin recalls. “For a long time I thought that was how we would be for the rest of our lives. He’s just going to talk about these things, and a movie’s never going to be made. I decided you cannot judge a person by whether or not he works.”

By the time their second son, Mason, was born, in 1990, Lee was thirty-six and had little to show for his endeavors. He had twenty-three dollars in his bank account. A few months earlier, in the hope of winning a sixteen-thousand-dollar screenplay prize set up by the Taiwanese government, he had dashed off a first draft of “Pushing Hands” and included in his submission a script he’d written some years before—“The Wedding Banquet”—which he had put aside, because “it was Chinese so they couldn’t make it in America, and it’s gay so it couldn’t be made in Taiwan.” In late 1990, he got word that the screenplays not only had won the competition’s two top prizes but had also earned him the support of the new head of Taiwan’s Central Motion Pictures, who offered to put nearly four hundred thousand dollars toward the making of “Pushing Hands.”



“There’s no easy way I can tell you this, so I’m sending you to someone who can.”

Two weeks after winning the contest, Lee walked into the New York offices of Good Machine, a company that Ted Hope and James Schamus had recently founded to produce low-budget movies. The first thing Lee said was “If I don’t make a movie soon, I think I’ll die.” “It was clear when Ang left the room why he had not made a movie in six years,” Schamus says. “The idea of flying this guy to Los Angeles for a story meeting—forget it. When he left the office, I turned to Ted and said two things. One was 'Boy, this guy can't pitch his way out of a paper bag.' And two: 'He wasn't pitching a movie, he was describing a movie he'd already made. He just needs somebody to realize it.' " Schamus goes on, "It wasn't as if there was magic in the room, but there was enough. At the end of the meeting, I said, 'This guy's a filmmaker.' " The encounter changed all of their lives. Lee had finally met the collaborators who had his measure.

"Part of James's role"—while working with Lee on screenplays—"was making sure that what was in Ang's head was on the page," says Hope, who filled a similar role on the set as Lee's assistant director for "Pushing Hands." Schamus was able to translate, as well as negotiate, American manners and idioms. "Being a foreigner, you look dumber, your speech is slower," Lee says. "People who have a lot of money to throw around, they feel unconfident because you don't look confident. I just wasn't American enough." Schamus, with his knowledge of film culture, the film business, and film writing, was a triple godsend. Where Lee was angular and contained, and, in social situations, could seem almost dull, Schamus was round, buoyant, and full of ideas, which spilled out of his head in a rush of literate words. "Even if Ang had grown up as an American kid, there is something in his psychic constitution that would have been difficult for him to translate," Schamus says. "While the rest of us are dealing with things on a manifest level, the conversation that's going on in Ang's head is on a plane that is completely latent. It stays below the surface, but it's very powerful." Lee will often say, "Let me think about that for a moment," and then do just that. He ponders either with his head down and his hands clasped together on his chest or while holding his right hand against his cheek—a position that Emma Thompson calls his "apogee of distress." "There is the strategy of the entire movie in his head," Hope says. "Ang's aware of the little nuances and gestures of both what we've shot and recorded and of how he anticipates covering the scene."

Lee's first three films—his Chinese trilogy—explore the dilemma of translation between the East and the West. The screenplays themselves, as Schamus writes in an introduction to two of them, "were written in Chinese, then translated into English, rewritten in English, translated back into Chinese, and eventually subtitled in Chinese and English and a dozen other languages." The Lee-Schamus process is a testament to the trust between the two men. "I go into my hole to write," Schamus says. "I emerge to give him pages. But there's very little of that standing over my shoulder. He will let me roam and screw up. What he wants to know, as I'm writing the stuff, is why. Why are we making the movie? What's so interesting about that? What's the theme? The topic? He trusts we'll get there. But he also knows that he will not be able to make a good movie unless he has the answer to those questions." In the case of "The Wedding Banquet" (which was the most profitable film of 1993, based on budget-to-box-office ratio, surpassing even "Jurassic Park"), Lee kept sending back Schamus's pages, insisting that the psychology of the characters was not Chinese enough. "Finally, in frustration, I'd simply give up and write the scenes as 'Jewish' as I could make them," Schamus writes. " 'Ah-ha,' Ang would respond on reading the draft. 'Very Chinese!' "

"When I stayed home a lot," Lee has said, "I thought about the old Chinese teaching regarding the essence of life: the only thing you can count on is that everything will change. That gave me a feeling of what I wanted to say about life. It's about people's adjustment to change. And for a Chinese person the biggest change is the value of change itself." He went on, "You become a Westerner and you betray your parents. Something you feel unable to deal with: total guilt." In each of Lee's first three films, a patriarchal figure is propelled progressively closer to the West. In "Pushing Hands," the emotionally dispossessed Tai Chi master struggles with the Western notion of family; in "The Wedding Banquet," a Taiwanese former general and his wife, in order to have a grandchild, reach a sort of stalemate with their married gay son, who lives in New York; in "Eat Drink Man Woman," the father figure—a master chef with three adult daughters, who longs to marry the girl next door—is himself infected with a Western hankering for self-fulfillment. For all three, Lee chose the same actor, Lung Sihung (who died while Lee was shooting "The Hulk"). "When he's not speaking, you feel the pain in his face," Lee said of Liung. "Inside he's getting weaker, but he has to hold up that face so that order will keep going in society. He plays up to his role, but he's losing his grip with the young people." The trilogy, Lee says, "was about me, me, me."

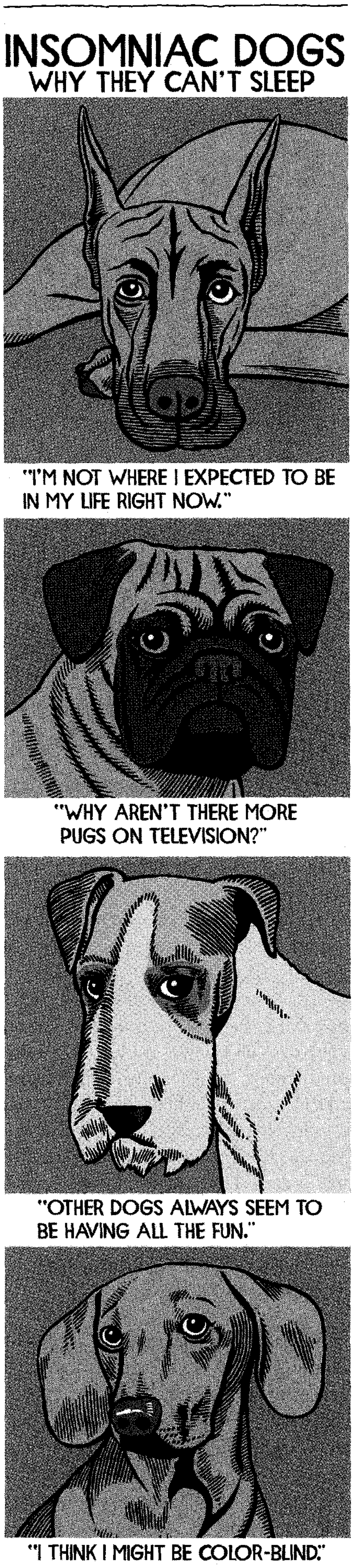
After so much fallow time, Lee made his first five movies in five years. And as his confidence grew he repeatedly raised the bar of his narrative challenges. In the trilogy, he went from a modest two-character drama to ensemble dramas; next, he progressed from a British period piece—"Sense and Sensibility"—to "The Ice Storm" 's medley of eight story lines in suburban America ("It might as well have been science fiction to me," Lee said). In "Ride with the Devil"—a critical flop, in which beautiful action set pieces are undermined by an ambling narrative—he struggled with the dilemmas of the Civil War South. Then, having done his Western, he did what can only be called an Eastern: the Chinese-language action epic "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," for which he discovered what he calls "an abstract form of filmmaking, where the images and editing are like a dance and music." By incorporating character and story into the conventions of kung fu, Lee took martial arts out of the realm of special effects and into the realm of the mystical. In "The Hulk," he takes what he learned about visual effects in "Crouching Tiger" to a new level of complexity and expressiveness. "Ang has been very clear not to define himself, both in terms of the genres he picks and the characters the audience may sympathize with," Hope says.

Still, there are certain motifs that crop up throughout his œuvre. "All the leading men in my movies are indecisive," Lee says. "All the women characters are very decisive. That's my experience." He goes on, "By nature, I'm indecisive. I get pulled both ways." Lee incorporates this personal limitation into the drama of his characters: the father torn between cultures in "Eat Drink Man Woman," the husband torn between women in "The Ice Storm," the young bushwhacker torn between violence and family in "Ride with the Devil." Lee's directing method is also tantalizingly open-ended. "His desire and his meaning are always left a bit open to discussion," Hope says. "Some directors are very much about the image; others are about performance. Ang is involved in all aspects of the movie—cinematography, production design, editorial, music. This lack of specificity caused everyone on the crew to always be reaching."

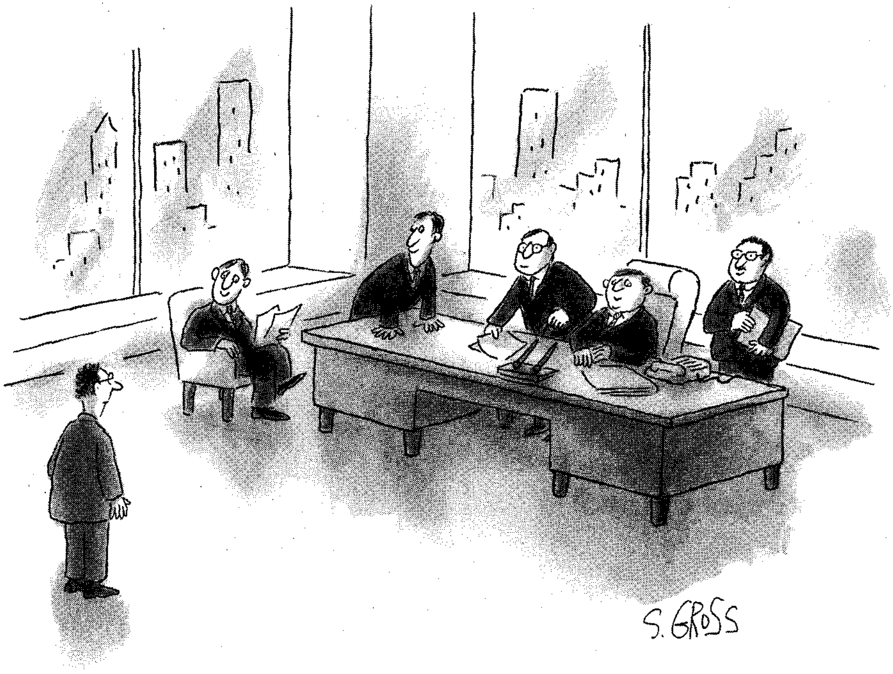
"In my culture, you're part of the group," Lee says. "You have to find harmony, so you repress, repress, repress. So far, repression is my biggest source of creativity. Repression—release. Repression—acceleration. That's a good story." This sense of psychological constriction is handled by Lee most brilliantly in "The Ice Storm," where nature provides an uncanny metaphor for the emotional collapse of the characters. But Lee's first study of the connection of repression to landscape came in his fourth film, "Sense and Sensibility," which he made for less than sixteen million dollars. Emma Thompson, who wrote the screenplay, which won an Academy Award, and who played Elinor Dashwood, the pragmatic elder daughter, was sold on the idea of using Lee as her director after watching "Eat Drink Man Woman." "It very much connected to Jane Austen," she says. "It was sisters with a difficult father talking to each other. At one point, the eldest sister says to the younger, 'What do you know of my heart?' I gasped. It's actually the same line in 'Sense and Sensibility.' Exactly the same line." Still, Lee's distance from the English language—and from that watershed moment in British history when patriarchy and capitalism collided—called out of him a more fluid visual expression. "There's a sense of landscape as character that I think would have escaped me," Thompson says. "He was always looking for exactly the right field, exactly the right place for us to sit, which expanded the conversation so that narrative and landscape bled into one another." Lee says, "I didn't have to do that when I did Chinese films, because it's all about words—the things I want to say. But because of the language barrier I couldn't really talk with the English actors that much."

"Ang would always come up to you and say something unexpectedly crushing," recalls Thompson, whom Lee urged not to "look so old." His first note to Kate Winslet, who played Marianne, the spirited younger sister, was "You will do better." Hugh Grant, who played the shy Edward Ferrars, nicknamed him Fang and, later, the Brute. At the wrap party, Winslet and Thompson and other cast members rewrote the Rolling Stones' song "Angie" and serenaded their director: "Ang Lee / I still love you / Remember all those nights we cried." Now Lee can laugh at the memory, but on the set the clash of cultures confounded everyone for a while. On the first day of shooting, Lee was filming Thompson and Grant as their characters, meeting for the first time, strolled in a garden. Lee wanted to film it in long-shot to convey an atmosphere of expectation. The actors tried it, and then suggested shooting the scene from a different angle. Lee took umbrage at what seemed to them a normal query. "He was awake all night, and I was awake all night, both of us feeling dreadful," Thompson says. As she wrote in her diary, "In the event his idea was much better than ours, but that we should have had an idea at all came as a genuine shock, and he was hurt and confused." "In Taiwan, I am emperor," Lee said afterward. "Here, I am President."

Lee's emphasis on framing and background is not unusual, given his origins. "Westerners and Asians literally see different worlds," Richard Nisbett, a social psychologist, writes in "The Geography of Thought." "Modern Westerners see a world of objects—discrete and unconnected *things*. . . . Modern Asians are inclined to see a world of substances—continuous masses of *matter*." On each project, Lee submerges himself and his actors in the deeper context of their story. He assigns homework for almost all his films. Before the making of "Sense and Sensibility," as Thompson noted in her diary, he asked for "character studies" and offered a list of questions, "mostly addressing background and 'inner life.' " (When Winslet handed in a twenty-page analysis of Marianne, he told her that it was "wrong, all wrong.") To prepare himself for "The Ice Storm," Lee amassed a huge dossier, which the cinematographer Frederick Elmes calls "an encyclopedia of what the early seventies were like: Where was the war


INSOMNIAC DOGS
WHY THEY CAN'T SLEEP
"I'M NOT WHERE I EXPECTED TO BE IN MY LIFE RIGHT NOW."
"WHY AREN'T THERE MORE PUGS ON TELEVISION?"
"OTHER DOGS ALWAYS SEEM TO BE HAVING ALL THE FUN."
"I THINK I MIGHT BE COLOR-BLIND."

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN



"Work with us, we're trying to screw you."

• •

at? What was Johnny Carson wearing? What was on television? What were the hair styles?"

For "The Hulk," Lee examined molecular growth, blood cells, galaxies, and, as Dennis Muren, Industrial Light + Magic's senior visual-effects supervisor, says, "how there's some connection in the universe that makes everything work: a kind of yin-yang thing he wanted to get into the story." Lee also collected twenty-four boxes of rocks—"their texture shows the flow of time, they remind you that the universe is kind of a big pot of soup," he says—as well as lichen, starfish, and jellyfish, whose shapes were intended to help his collaborators imagine the Hulk's dissonant interior. "He made us feel the rocks and lichen and asked us what we felt," Nolte recalls. "Ang spins a cocoon that is so complex that the actor can't find his way out—he has to live his way out."

I met up with Lee in Los Angeles at the end of May, on the scoring stage at Twentieth Century Fox—a nondescript barn of a building whose only distinguishing feature is a topiary hedge trimmed in the shape of a bass fiddle. He was in position at a behemoth soundboard beside the composer Danny Elfman, a veteran of fifty-five films, who had turned out "The Hulk" 's edgy hundred-and-seven-minute score in a record thirty-seven days. The hundred-piece orchestra behind a glass panel in front of Lee had spent the previous eight days recording, and many of the musicians, along with Elfman, were drinking wheat-grass shooters with their orange juice for a hit of New Age energy. When I got there, they were scoring a scene—projected above them on a large screen—in which a series of Army tanks chase the Hulk across the desert. Elfman, like an infantryman calling up ordnance, was dropping Eastern timpani, Bombay strings, and Mongolian chants into the score. "We use a lot of drums, because the drum is the most primal," Lee said.

By the beginning of June, the fine-tuning of the music, the tweaking of imagery, the shuttling between L.A. and San Rafael, and the fifteen-hour days were over; after two years of work, Lee delivered the final print to the studio and went home to his family—to what he calls his "angel side." "When I first decided to be a filmmaker, I thought it was my way of acting," he says. "Then it became my ultimate expression. Now it's just the texture of my life. It's not so much expression anymore. It consumes me." As a result, Lee sees little of his wife and family. In a diary passage, Emma Thompson describes standing beside him during the shooting of "Sense and Sensibility" as he looked out mournfully over an estuary: "After a moment, he said, waving towards the water, 'Tide goes in, tide goes out, tide goes in, tide goes out—and still no sex.' "

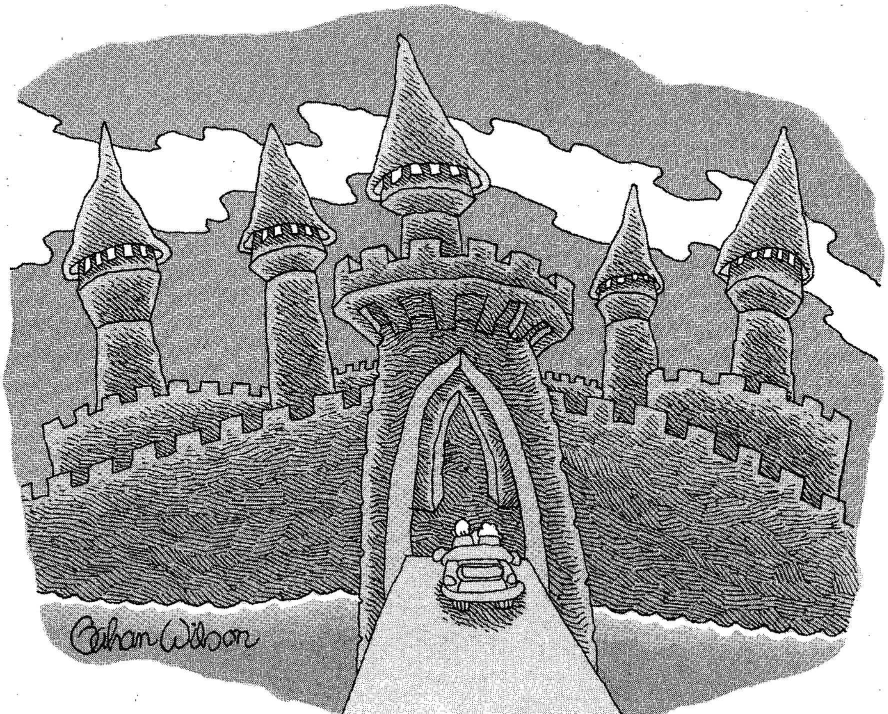
This spring, with the thirteen-year-old Mason in tow, Lin paid a visit to the set. She sat at the back of the projection room while Lee talked and gave strict notes to the artist handling the multi-panel screen. Lin, who her husband says "has a problem with authority," had never seen him in director mode. Afterward, she told Lee, "If I worked for you, I'd kill you." "She's probably right," Lee says. "I'm too picky. But in life I'm not picky at all. It's like I don't know what to do. If I don't make movies, there's nothing you can respect me for." When he's on the job, he calls Lin once a week; on school holidays, his sons visit him on the set. On the scoring stage, as he and Elfman worked up the moody accents under the film, Lee paused long enough to call Haan at Brown University, where he is a freshman. "It's Babi," he said to an answering machine. "Have a great birthday. It's six o'clock." "I'm a strange dad," he acknowledges. "For six years, I laid a very solid emotional foundation to our relationship, which I bank from for the rest of my life. Now I don't see them, but the foundation is there."

On the set, Lee says, "my job is telling people what I want, but when I get home it's back to life—what she wants." "My biggest job is bringing him down to earth," Lin says. "It takes more and more of an adjustment for him. He knows he has to get real when I'm around." At home, Lee is cast, he says, in the role of "the third boy in the family—the naughtiest one." "He gets yelled at more than the kids," Lin says. "He feels very secure being yelled at." He is resentful when Lin works late at the lab. "I try to get used to it," he says. "But when I'm done working I need a lot of nurturing from her." Lee claims to be very "lacklustre" when he isn't working. "I don't have a hobby," he says. "I don't have a life." His main activity is cooking for the family. For Lee, as for the father in "Eat Drink Man Woman," cooking is a gesture of affection; the boys, he says, prefer his food to the "junk she gives them," and the only way "I can show my emotion is to feed them." For her part, Lin considers cooking "a waste of time" and sometimes doesn't even arrive home in time for Lee's feasts. "They don't wait for me anymore," she says. "Otherwise I get upset. I think that's a violation of my rights."

"The Hulk," with its technical complexities and its blockbuster potential, has kept Lee away from his family even longer than his other films. He is accustomed to art-house openings—a few prints in a few theatres in New York and L.A., "and gradually building up from word of mouth." "Crouching Tiger" cost twelve million dollars to make, and Lee had to contribute his salary to get it done. "The Hulk" is another matter: its budget was about a hundred and fifty million, and the initial print order was for fourteen thousand copies. "Size does matter," Lee says. "I've experienced things I never experienced before—the marketing. It's just another world. They're marketing everything that's green." From garbage bags to skateboards, more than a hundred and fifty items will be issued with a "Hulk" logo on them. And, to appeal to the teen market, Lee agreed to have the song "Set Me Free"—performed by several former Guns 'N Roses members with Suicidal Tendencies' Dave Kushner and the Stone Temple Pilots singer Scott Weiland—play over the final credits.

So at the end of a long day of scoring he found himself making a courtesy call at Conway Studios, on Melrose Avenue, where the band was being filmed performing the song. As Lee's car rolled through the studio gates into a sort of hallucinogenic tropical oasis—with fairy lights decorating palm fronds and candles lighting the brick path to the recording bungalow—he confessed under his breath that this would be his first visit to a rock recording session. While he waited for the band to arrive, Lee, who is a sports fan, sat in a leather chair in the control room watching an N.B.A. playoff game; at the station break, an advertisement for "The Hulk" came on the screen. Eventually, a collection of thin, tattooed, long-haired men of a certain middle age swaggered in. "So how's it going?" a frizzy-haired rocker with leather pants, sneakers, and what looked like a key chain attached to his nose asked Lee. "I hope you're gonna get the song out there," he added. "Gonna sit in with us? Maybe play some cowbells?" Lee smiled and turned to me. "That's Splash," he said. "Slash," his assistant said. While the members of the band performed the song four times with their backs to Lee, and Weiland tried to situate himself as close as possible to the handheld camera, the sound engineer stood at his console, like Little Richard at the piano, his long hair juddering to the drummer's ear-splitting downbeat. Lee seemed unfazed. The next morning, at the scoring studio, where Elfman was quietly making adjustments to the sound, Lee suddenly pushed his chair back, waved his arms, and started bouncing to the music like the Conway Studio engineer. "You're, like, boring," he said to Elfman.

On a private jet shuttling him back that afternoon to a sound-mixing studio at George Lucas's Skywalker Ranch, Lee put his feet up on a seat and considered his career. "Moviemaking is never as good as what you imagine," he said. "Any good idea that's floating in the air—that's the best. Then you have to bring it down so people can see it, fix it on celluloid. You have to make the most of that celluloid fixture." To Lee, "shooting is like buying groceries and the real cooking is at the editing table." The customers require a story and a satisfactory ending, and Lee, as he pointed out, "has to deliver the goods." "But to me it's more about sequences," he said. "Certain feelings. A certain taste. That's more important than telling the story." He went on, "You make a movie for moments, and you need an excuse to put those moments in—you need structure." His films abound in those ineffable moments: an elaborate Chinese meal being prepared in "Eat Drink Man Woman"; Marianne running up a rain-swept hill in "Sense and Sensibility"; the motif of reflections in "The Ice Storm"; the treetop fight in "Crouching Tiger"; the Hulk hanging forlornly onto the fuselage of a jet as it flies into the stratosphere. These are sequences that still give Lee the sense of wonder and innocence and truth that he calls "the aroma." He wasn't sure where he'd go in pursuit of his next moment, but one story he was thinking of was Houdini's. "People come to see him die," he said. "That's very appealing to me. Big showmanship, big escape. Showing people you're not bound by anything. It's inspiring." The plane started its bumpy descent to the Oakland airport. Lee drifted away for a moment, then he looked over at me. "That's a big part of art, what art is," he said. "You strip down. It's yourself that people can see. They have to see you take the risk." ♦

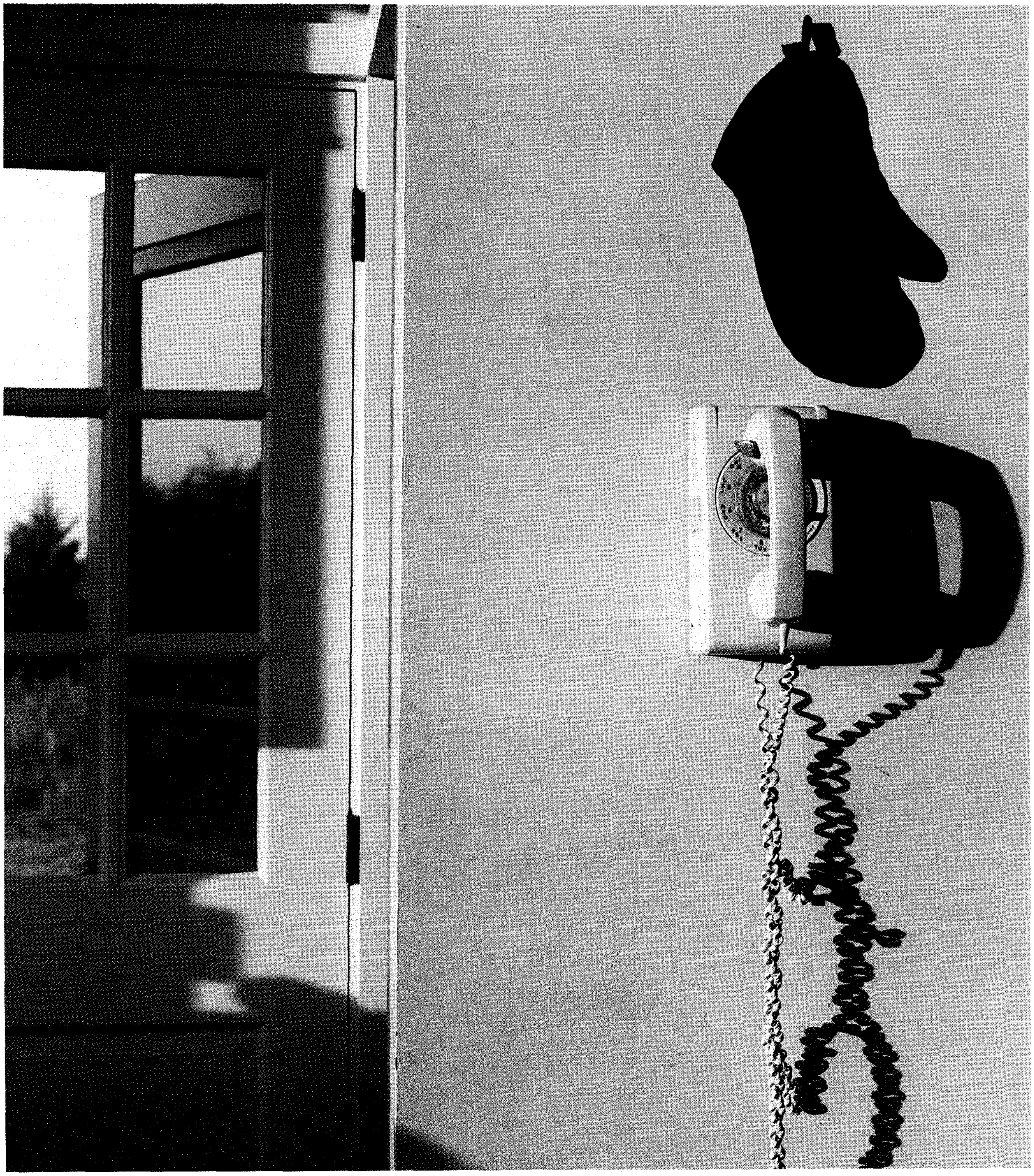


"The guide book says it's the best B.&B. in the Carpathians."

FICTION

HARVEY'S DREAM

BY STEPHEN KING



Janet turns from the sink and, boom, all at once her husband of nearly thirty years is sitting at the kitchen table in a white T-shirt and a pair of Big Dog boxers, watching her.

More and more often she has found this weekday commodore of Wall Street in just this place and dressed in just this fashion come Saturday morning: slumped at the shoulder and blank in the eye, a white scruff showing on his cheeks, mantits sagging out the front of his T, hair standing up in back like Alfalfa of the Little Rascals grown old and stupid. Janet and her friend Hannah have frightened each other lately (like little girls telling ghost stories during a sleepover) by swapping Alzheimer's tales: who can no longer recognize his wife, who can no longer remember the names of her children.

But she doesn't really believe these silent Saturday-morning appearances have anything to do with early-onset Alzheimer's; on any given weekday morning Harvey Stevens is ready and raring to go by six-forty-five, a man of sixty who looks fifty (well, fifty-four) in either of his best suits, and who can still cut a trade, buy on margin, or sell short with the best of them.

No, she thinks, this is merely practicing to be old, and she hates it. She's afraid that when he retires it will be this way every morning, at least until she gives him a glass of orange juice and asks him (with an increasing impatience she won't be able to help) if he wants cereal or just toast. She's afraid she'll turn from whatever she's doing and see him sitting there in a bar of far too brilliant morning sun, Harvey in the morning, Harvey in his T-shirt and his boxer shorts, legs spread apart so she can view the meagre bulge of his basket (should she care to) and see the yellow calluses on his great toes, which always make her think of Wallace Stevens having on about the Emperor of Ice Cream. Sitting there silent and dopily contemplative instead of ready and raring, psyching himself up for the day. God, she hopes she's wrong. It makes life seem so thin, so stupid somehow. She can't help wondering if this is what they fought through for, raised and married off their three girls for, got past his inevitable middle-aged affair for, worked for and sometimes (let's face it) grabbed for. If this is where you come out of the deep dark woods, Janet thinks, this . . . this parking lot . . . then why does anyone do it?

But the answer is easy. Because you didn't know. You discarded most of the lies along the way but held on to the one that said life *mattered.* You kept a scrapbook devoted to the girls, and in it they were still young and still interesting in their possibilities: Trisha, the eldest, wearing a top hat and waving a tinfoil wand over Tim, the cocker spaniel; Jenna, frozen in mid-jump halfway through the lawn sprinkler, her taste for dope, credit cards, and older men still far over the horizon; Stephanie, the youngest, at the county spelling bee, where "cantaloupe" turned out to be her Waterloo. Somewhere in most of these pictures (usually in the background) were Janet and the man she had married, always smiling, as if it were against the law to do anything else.

Then one day you made the mistake of looking over your shoulder and discovered that the girls were grown and that the man you had struggled to stay married to was sitting with his legs apart, his fish-white legs, staring into a bar of sun, and by God maybe he looked fifty-four in either of his best suits, but sitting there at the kitchen table like that he looked seventy. Hell, seventy-five. He looked like what the goons on "The Sopranos" called a mope.

She turns back to the sink and sneezes delicately, once, twice, a third time.

"How are they this morning?" he asks, meaning her sinuses, meaning her allergies. The answer is not very good, but, like a surprising number of bad things, her summer allergies have their sunny side. She no longer has to sleep with him and fight for her share of the covers in the middle of the night; no longer has to listen to the occasional muffled fart as Harvey soldiers ever deeper into sleep. Most nights during the summer she gets six, even seven hours, and that's more than enough. When fall comes and he moves back in from the guest room, it will drop to four, and much of that will be troubled.

One year, she knows, he won't move back in. And although she doesn't tell him so—it would hurt his feelings, and she still doesn't like to hurt his feelings; this is what now passes for love between them, at least going from her direction to his—she will be glad.

She sighs and reaches into the pot of water in the sink. Grope

"Not so bad," she says.

And then, just when sh
ing (and not for the first time)
this life holds no more surprise
plumbed marital depths, he sa
strangely casual voice, "It's a good
you weren't sleeping with me last n
Jax. I had a bad dream. I actually screa
myself awake."

She's startled. How long has it been since he called her Jax instead of Janet or Jan? The last is a nickname she secretly hates. It makes her think of that syrupy-sweet actress on "Lassie" when she was a kid, the little boy (Timmy, his name was Timmy) always fell down a well or got bitten by a snake or trapped under a rock, and what kind of parents put a kid's life in the hands of a fucking collie?

She turns to him again, forgetting the pot with the last egg still in it, the water now long enough off the boil to be lukewarm. He had a bad dream? Harvey? She tries to remember when Harvey has mentioned having had any kind of dream and has no luck. All that comes is a vague memory of their courtship days, Harvey saying something like "I dream of you," she herself young enough to think it sweet instead of lame.

"You what?"

"Screamed myself awake," he says. "Did you not hear me?"

"No." Still looking at him. Wondering if he's kidding her. If it's some kind of bizarre morning joke. But Harvey is not a joking man. His idea of humor is telling anecdotes at dinner about his Army days. She has heard all of them at least a hundred times.

"I was screaming words, but I wasn't really able to say them. It was like . . . I don't know . . . I couldn't close my mouth around them. I sounded like I'd had a stroke. And my voice was lower. Not like my own voice at all." He pauses. "I heard myself, and made myself stop. But I was shaking all over, and I had to turn on the light for a little while. I tried to pee, and I couldn't. These days it seems like I can always pee—a little, anyway—but not this morning at two-forty-seven." He pauses, sitting there in his bar of sun. She can see dust motes dancing in it. They seem to give him a halo.

"What was your dream?" she asks, and here is an odd thing: for the first time in maybe five years, since they stayed up

DETAIL, STEPHEN ANDERSON, "LITTLE MAN" (2000)

until midnight discussing whether to hold the Motorola stock or sell it (they wound up selling), she's interested in something he has to say.

"I don't know if I want to tell you," he says, sounding uncharacteristically shy. He turns, picks up the pepper mill, and begins to toss it from hand to hand.

"They say if you tell your dreams they won't come true," she says to him, and here is Odd Thing No. 2: all at once Harvey looks there, in a way he hasn't looked to her in years. Even his shadow on the wall above the toaster oven looks somehow more there. She thinks, He looks as though he matters, and why should that be? Why, when I was just thinking that life is thin, should it seem thick? This is a summer morning in late June. We are in Connecticut. When June comes we are always in Connecticut. Soon one of us will get the newspaper, which will be divided into three parts, like Gaul.

"Do they say so?" He considers the idea, eyebrows raised (she needs to pluck them again, they are getting that wild look, and he never knows), tossing the pepper mill from hand to hand. She would like to tell him to stop doing that, it's making her nervous (like the exclamatory blackness of his shadow on the wall, like her very beating heart, which has suddenly begun to accelerate its rhythm for no reason at all), but she doesn't want to distract him from whatever is going on in his Saturday-morning head. And then he puts the pepper mill down anyway, which should be all right but somehow isn't, because it has its own shadow—it runs out long on the table like the shadow of an oversized chess piece, even the toast crumbs lying there have shadows, and she has no idea why that should frighten her but it does. She thinks of the Cheshire Cat telling Alice, "We're all mad here," and suddenly she doesn't want to hear Harvey's stupid dream, the one from which he awakened himself screaming and sounding like a man who has had a stroke. Suddenly she doesn't want life to be anything but thin. Thin is O.K., thin is good, just look at the actresses in the movies if you doubt it.

Nothing must announce itself, she thinks feverishly. Yes, feverishly; it's as if she's having a hot flash, although she could have sworn all that nonsense ended two or three years ago. Nothing must announce itself, it's Saturday morning and nothing must announce itself.

She opens her mouth to tell him she got it backward, what they really say is that if you tell your dreams they will come true, but it's too late, he's already talking, and it occurs to her that this is her punishment for dismissing life as thin. Life is actually like a Jethro Tull song, thick as a brick, how could she have ever thought otherwise?

"I dreamed it was morning and I came down to the kitchen," he says. "Saturday morning, just like this, only you weren't up yet."

"I'm always up before you on Saturday morning," she says.

"I know, but this was a dream," he says patiently, and she can see the white hairs on the insides of his thighs, where the muscles are wasted and starved. Once he played tennis, but those days are done. She thinks, with a viciousness that is entirely unlike her, You will have a heart attack, white man, that's what will finish you, and maybe they'll discuss giving you an obit in the *Times*, but if a B-movie actress from the fifties died that day, or a semi-famous ballerina from the forties, you won't even get that.

"But it was like this," he says. "I mean, the sun was shining in." He raises a hand and stirs the dust motes into lively life around his head and she wants to scream at him not to do that, not to disturb the universe like that.

"I could see my shadow on the floor and it never looked so bright or so thick." He pauses, then smiles, and she sees how cracked his lips are. " 'Bright' 's a funny word to use for a shadow, isn't it? 'Thick,' too."

"Harvey—"

"I crossed to the window," he says, "and I looked out, and I saw there was a dent in the side of the Friedmans' Volvo, and I knew—somehow—that Frank had been out drinking and that the dent happened coming home."

She suddenly feels that she will faint. She saw the dent in the side of Frank Friedman's Volvo herself, when she went to the door to see if the newspaper had come (it hadn't), and she thought the same thing, that Frank had been out at the Gourd and scraped something in the parking lot. How does the other guy look? had been her exact thought.

The idea that Harvey has also seen this comes to her, that he is goofing with her for some strange reason of his own.

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Certainly it's possible; the guest room where he sleeps on summer nights has an angle on the street. Only Harvey isn't that sort of man. “Goofing” is not Harvey Stevens's “thing.”

There is sweat on her cheeks and brow and neck, she can feel it, and her heart is beating faster than ever. There really is a sense of something looming, and why should this be happening now? Now, when the world is quiet, when prospects are tranquil? If I asked for this, I'm sorry, she thinks . . . or maybe she's actually praying. Take it back, please take it back.

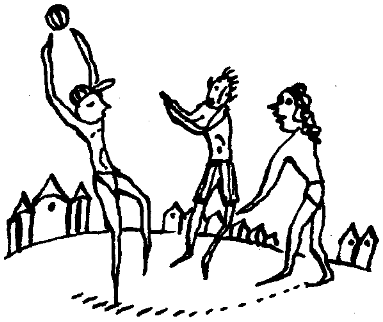
“I went to the refrigerator,” Harvey is saying, “and I looked inside, and I saw a plate of devilled eggs with a piece of Saran wrap over them. I was delighted—I wanted lunch at seven in the morning!”

He laughs. Janet—Jax that was—looks down into the pot sitting in the sink. At the one hard-boiled egg left in it. The others have been shelled and neatly sliced in two, the yolks scooped out. They are in a bowl beside the drying rack. Beside the bowl is the jar of mayonnaise. She has been planning to serve the devilled eggs for lunch, along with a green salad.

“I don't want to hear the rest,” she says, but in a voice so low she can barely hear it herself. Once she was in the Dramatics Club and now she can't even project across the kitchen. The muscles in her chest feel all loose, the way Harvey's legs would if he tried to play tennis.

“I thought I would have just one,” Harvey says, “and then I thought, No, if I do that she'll yell at me. And then the phone rang. I dashed for it because I didn't want it to wake you up, and here comes the scary part. Do you want to hear the scary part?”

No, she thinks from her place by the sink. I don't want to hear the scary part. But at the same time she does want to hear the scary part, everyone wants to hear the scary part, we're all mad here, and her mother really did say that if you told your dreams they wouldn't come true, which meant you were supposed to tell the nightmares and save the good ones for yourself, hide them like a tooth under the pillow. They have three girls. One of them lives just down the road, Jenna the gay divorcée, same name as one of the Bush twins, and doesn't Jenna hate that; these days she insists that people call her Jen. Three girls, which meant a lot of teeth under a lot of pillows, a lot of worries about strangers in cars offering rides and candy, which had meant a lot of precautions, and oh how she hopes her mother was right, that telling a bad dream is like putting a stake in a vampire's heart.

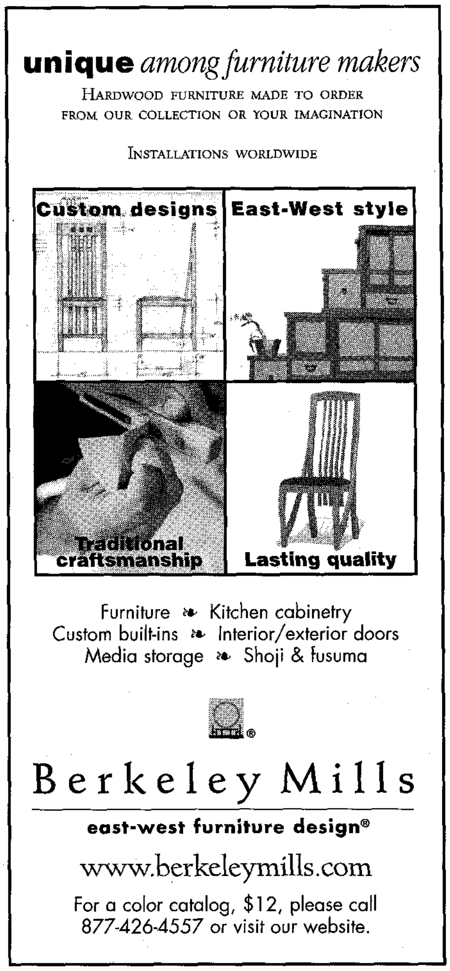


“I picked up the phone,” Harvey says, “and it was Trisha.” Trisha is their oldest daughter, who idolized Houdini and Blackstone before discovering boys. “She only said one word at first, just ‘Dad,’ but I knew it was Trisha. You know how you always know?”

Yes. She knows how you always know. How you always know your own, from the very first word, at least until they grow up and become someone else's.

“I said, ‘Hi, Trish, why you calling so early, hon? Your mom's still in the sack.’ And at first there was no answer. I thought we'd been cut off, and then I heard these whispering whimpering sounds. Not words but half-words. Like she was trying to talk but hardly anything could come out because she wasn't able to muster any strength or get her breath. And that was when I started being afraid.”

Well, then, he's pretty slow, isn't he? Because Janet—who was Jax at Sarah Lawrence, Jax in the Dramatics Club, Jax the truly excellent French-kisser, Jax who smoked Gitanes and affected enjoyment of tequila shooters—Janet has been scared for quite some time now, was scared even before Harvey mentioned the dent in the side of Frank Friedman's Volvo. And thinking of that makes her think of the phone conversation she had with her friend Hannah not even a week ago, the one that eventually progressed to Alzheimer's ghost stories. Hannah in the city, Janet curled up on the window seat in the living room and looking out at their one-acre share of Westport, at all the beautiful growing things that make her sneeze and water at the eyes, and before the conversation turned to Alzheimer's they had discussed first Lucy Fried-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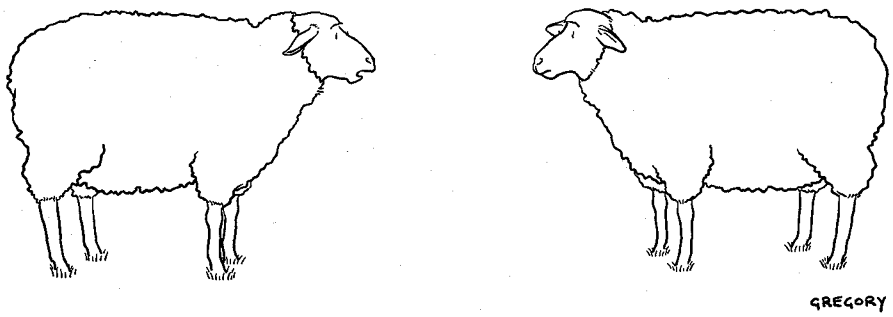

"Sure, I follow the herd—not out of brainless obedience, mind you, but out of a deep and abiding respect for the concept of community."

man and then Frank, and which one of them had said it? Which one of them had said, "If he doesn't do something about his drinking and driving, he's eventually going to kill somebody"?

"And then Trish said what sounded like 'lees' or 'least,' but in the dream I knew she was . . . eliding? . . . is that the word? Eliding the first syllable, and that what she was really saying was 'police.' I asked her what about the police, what was she trying to say about the police, and I sat down. Right there." He points to the chair in what they call the telephone nook. "There was some more silence, then a few more of those half-words, those whispered half-words. She was making me so mad doing that, I thought, Drama queen, same as it ever was, but then she said, 'number,' just as clear as a bell. And I knew—the way I knew she was trying to say 'police'—that she was trying to tell me the police had called her because they didn't have our number."

Janet nods numbly. They decided to unlist their number two years ago because reporters kept calling Harvey about the Enron mess. Usually at dinnertime. Not because he'd had anything to do with Enron per se but because those big energy companies were sort of a specialty of his. He'd even served on a Presidential commission a few years earlier, when Clinton had been the big kahuna and the world had been (in her humble opinion, at least) a slightly better, slightly safer place. And while there were a lot of things about Harvey she no longer liked, one thing she knew perfectly well was that he had more integrity in his little finger than all those Enron sleazebags put together. She might sometimes be bored by integrity, but she knows what it is.

But don't the police have a way of getting unlisted numbers? Well, maybe not if they're in a hurry to find something out or tell somebody something. Plus, dreams don't have to be logical, do they? Dreams are poems from the subconscious.

And now, because she can no longer bear to stand still, she goes to the kitchen door and looks out into the bright June day, looks out at Sewing Lane, which is their little version of what she supposes is the American dream. How quiet this morning lies, with a trillion drops of dew still sparkling on the grass! And still her heart hammers in her chest and the sweat rolls down her face and she wants to tell him he must stop, he must not tell this dream, this terrible dream. She must remind him that Jenna lives right down the road—Jen, that is, Jen who works at the Video Stop in the village and spends all too many weekend nights drinking at the Gourd with the likes of Frank Friedman, who is old enough to be her father. Which is undoubtedly part of the attraction.

"All these whispered little half-words," Harvey is saying, "and she would not speak up. Then I heard 'killed,' and I knew that one of the girls was dead. I just knew it. Not Trisha, because it was Trisha on the phone, but either Jenna or Stephanie. And I was so scared. I actually sat there wondering which one I wanted it to be, like Sophie's fucking Choice. I started to shout at her. 'Tell me which one! Tell me which one! For God's sake, Trish, tell me which one!' Only then the real world started to bleed through . . . always assuming there is such a thing. . . ."

Harvey utters a little laugh, and in the bright morning light Janet sees there is a red stain in the middle of the dent on the side of Frank Friedman's Volvo, and in the middle of the stain is a dark smutch that might be dirt or even hair. She can see Frank pulling up crooked to the curb at two in the morning, too drunk even to try the driveway, let alone the garage—strait is the gate, and all that. She can see him stumbling to the house with his head down, breathing hard through his nose. Viva ze bool.

"By then I knew I was in bed, but I could hear this low voice that didn't sound like mine at all, it sounded like some stranger's voice, and it couldn't put corners on any of the words it was saying. 'Ell-ee itch-un, ell-ee itch-un,' that's what it sounded like. 'Ell-ee itch-un, Ish!'"

Tell me which one. Tell me which one, Trish.

Harvey falls silent, thinking. Considering. The dust motes dance around his face. The sun makes his T-shirt almost too dazzling to look at; it is a T-shirt from a laundry-detergent ad.

"I lay there waiting for you to run in and see what was wrong," he finally says. "I lay there all over goosebumps, and trembling, telling myself it was just a dream, the way you do, of course, but also thinking how real it was. How marvellous, in a horrible way."

He stops again, thinking how to say what comes next, unaware that his wife is no longer listening to him. Jax-that-was is now employing all her mind, all her considerable powers of thought, to make herself believe that what she is seeing is not blood but just the Volvo's undercoating where the paint has been scraped away. "Undercoating" is a word her subconscious has been more than eager to cast up.

"It's amazing, isn't it, how deep imagination goes?" he says finally. "A dream like that is how a poet—one of the really great ones—must see his poem. Every detail so clear and so bright."

He falls silent and the kitchen belongs to the sun and the dancing motes; outside, the world is on hold. Janet looks at the Volvo across the street; it seems to pulse in her eyes, thick as a brick. When the phone rings, she would scream if she could draw breath, cover her ears if she could lift her hands. She hears Harvey get up and cross to the nook as it rings again, and then a third time.

It is a wrong number, she thinks. It has to be, because if you tell your dreams they don't come true.

Harvey says, "Hello?" ♦

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THE CRITICS

MUSICAL EVENTS

SHALL WE ROCK?

Composers getting funky.

BY ALEX ROSS

In the nineteen-twenties, various composers, not a few of them French, set out to write music inspired by jazz. The idea was that jazz would serve as raw material for the ultra-sophisticated imagination of the classical flâneur. It did not occur to these brave explorers of the musical wilderness that jazz was a new art form that had no need to be elevated by the European mind. Their conception of African-American music was opaque at best, racist at worst. "These entertainments are not art," Jean Cocteau wrote in an influential manifesto. "They excite like machines, animals, landscapes, danger." A scant two years later, Cocteau was declaring that jazz was over. In the end, all products of this sensibility, Stravinsky's jazz pieces included, pale next to the three-minute masterpieces of Armstrong and Ellington.

The phenomenon of *le jazz* serves as an object lesson for composers who wish to adorn their works with the trappings of pop. It came to mind during the annual Bang on a Can festival, at Symphony Space. Bang on a Can is a loose association of self-consciously edgy composers and performers whose stated aim is to write music "too funky for the academy and too structured for the club scene." They speak of their formative years this way: "We had the simplicity, energy and drive of pop music in our ears—we'd heard it from the cradle. But we also had the idea from our classical music training that composing was exalted." This too-neat division of labor—funky fun on one side, serious structure on the other—threatens to repeat the mistake of Paris in the twenties. It undersells both the wildness of composition and the wiliness of pop. Try telling James Brown that his music isn't structured.

If Bang on a Can's slogans show a trace of high-mindedness, its programs are generally free of it. The two-day festival—an evening concert followed by a daylong marathon—offered music that could variously be called rock or classical or world music or none of the above. There were electric-guitar noisescapes by Thurston Moore, of Sonic Youth, and an ambient set by the downtown sound artist DJ Spooky. Steve Reich bestowed his impeccable coolness. The defining moment—the biggest bang—came when James Tenney rigged fifteen gongs around the hall and had them reverberate from silence to noise and back again. The climax was as loud as any unamplified sound I've ever heard, and it did wonderfully strange things to the brain.

The minimalists were the first generation of pop-savvy composers. When Steve Reich wrote stripped-down process pieces like "It's Gonna Rain" and "Four Organs," he was listening to Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, and Junior Walker, all of whom played powerfully within the frame of one or two chords ("So What," "Subterranean Homesick Blues," "Shotgun"). But whenever Reich discusses the nonclassical sources of his music he adds a caveat. He has written that a composer needs to study the structure of, say, West African rhythm instead of simply imitating the surface. Otherwise, he says, it's just a case of "the old exoticism trip." In a classic Reich piece such as "Piano Phase"—given an electrifying, video-enhanced performance by David Cossin at Bang on a Can—you can perceive the influence of modal jazz or Motown bass lines more than you can hear them. This implacably original sound influenced much pop music in turn, and the composer eventually found himself with the unlikely title of "Father of DJ Culture." Various d.j.s, Spooky included, have honored him with remixes of his work.

Julia Wolfe, Michael Gordon, and David Lang, the founders of Bang on a Can, met while studying composition at Yale. They staged their first marathon concert in 1987, breaking free of the science-fair dullness of new-music concerts of the day. The roster of performers included an amplified ensemble called the Michael Gordon Philharmonic, which was similar in its makeup to Bang on a Can's current ensemble, the All-Stars. That group—Cossin on percussion, Robert Black on bass, Lisa Moore at the piano, Mark Stewart on electric guitar, Wendy Sutter playing cello, and Evan Ziporyn playing clarinet—can take on almost anything, from atonality to minimalism and on to a decent replica of Sonic Youth's art of noise.

The atmosphere of Bang on a Can concerts—there will be more of them at MASS MoCA, in the Berkshires, in July—is casual, unpretentious, convivial. No one sneers or stares if you wear jeans and a T-shirt. The crowd is encouraged to wander in and out, mill around, chat unobtrusively, and shout "Yow!" if something lively happens. This is how audiences behaved back in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, before codes of concert etiquette evolved. People who complain that Bang on a Can's informality is a marketing ploy may have it back to front: perhaps the dress-up ritual

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

DJ Spooky's sound collages represent the all-embracing Bang on a Can festival.

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is the artificial construct, the one that values fashion over music. In any case, Bang on a Can is—God forbid—fun.

Wolfe, Gordon, and Lang have developed a kind of house style, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree by colleagues such as Eve Beglarian, Annie Gosfield, Mikel Rouse, Lois Vierk, and the multitasking Ziporyn. Although the minimalist influence is obvious, this music is never as hypnotically spacious as Reich's "Music for Eighteen Musicians"; instead, it roots around in the grimiest and grittiest sonorities that classical instruments can produce. You hear a lot of irregularly driving beats and syncopations, rhythms that expand and contract and stop on a dime, much thumping of percussion and squawking of clarinets. "There's a seedy undertow to everything I do," the young Irish composer Donnacha Dennehy said.

With contemporary music adrift in stylistic confusion, it is refreshing to have a group of composers working in tandem toward common goals. That said, a few hours of Bang on a Can can approximate the feeling of racing down Canal Street in a cab with bad suspension. Any piece that begins quietly is guaranteed to end in a pounding climax. At high volumes, the instruments tend to become a blurry shriek in the loudspeakers. (Rock bands generally get a crisper sound from their guitars and amps, which are made for each other.) One piece after another seems to pump its arms in the air and shout, "Classical music *kicks ass!*" At some point, the urge to confound expectations becomes self-defeating. If a composition tries too hard to sound like rock, it sounds only like a lame, tame version of the real thing.

The occasional quiet spells came as a relief. Ziporyn's "Shadow Bang," a theatre piece created in collaboration with the Balinese shadow-puppet master I Wayan Wija, began with a Bang on a Can-y overture full of spasmodic syncopations and drum thwacks, but the middle sections, particularly the dreamlike underwater episode, moved into a world of shimmering, slowly shifting chords. Michael Gordon and David Lang have recently gone in a similar ambient direction. Large sections of Gordon's avant-garde film soundtrack "Decasia," issued last year on the label Cantaloupe Music, echo the cinematic grandeur of John Adams. Lang's most recent CD, "Child," recalls Arvo Pärt's stillness and Brian Eno's otherworldliness. Even here, though, wispy figures can become as unrelenting as heavy beats. Compare the classic pieces of Reich, in which slight changes become cosmic transformations, and something as basic as a bass line going down a half-step can send chills up the spine.

In the realm of radiant noise, none can outdo Thurston Moore. A lanky, shaggy-haired, eternally high-schoolish figure, he has been a mainstay of Sonic Youth since 1981, and before that he played in the minimalist electric-guitar orchestras of Glenn Branca. At Bang on a Can, he presented two conceptual works, "Stroking Piece #1" and "Pelvic Noise." The first of these re-created, with the help of the All-Stars, the hazy melancholia of Sonic Youth classics like "Schizophrenia." In the second, an homage to the Fluxus movement, he was joined by his wife, the bass player Kim Gordon. The two slowly walked toward each other from opposite ends of the stage, their amps cranked up to such an extreme that the tiniest movement set off caterwauling vibrations. Eventually, the couple met and embraced, as did the guitars. The piece managed to be both touching and terrifying—touching because it was a kind of lovers' ritual, and terrifying because the noise approached potentially ear-wrecking levels as the bodies joined.

DJ Spooky, by contrast, was the picture of digital cool. His real name is Paul D. Miller, and he is also known as That Subliminal Kid, the Ontological Assassin, and the Semiological Terrorist. As versed in the classical avant-garde as he is in d.j. culture, he uses turntables and laptops to create eclectic collages of sound, threading them together with silken dance beats. He is at work on an audiovisual deconstruction of "Birth of a Nation," part of which appeared at Symphony Space. Daniel Bernard Roumain added cadenzas on electric violin, dismantling "My Country 'Tis of Thee" in Hendrix style. In comparison with the d.j.'s other work, this set was a little too studiously spare, as if something had dropped out of the mix. You wished that the Bang on a Can All-Stars could have joined in, confirming the obvious relationship between Spooky's twenty-first-century aesthetic and the older mission espoused by John Cage—to "make available for musical purposes any and all sounds that can be heard." ♦

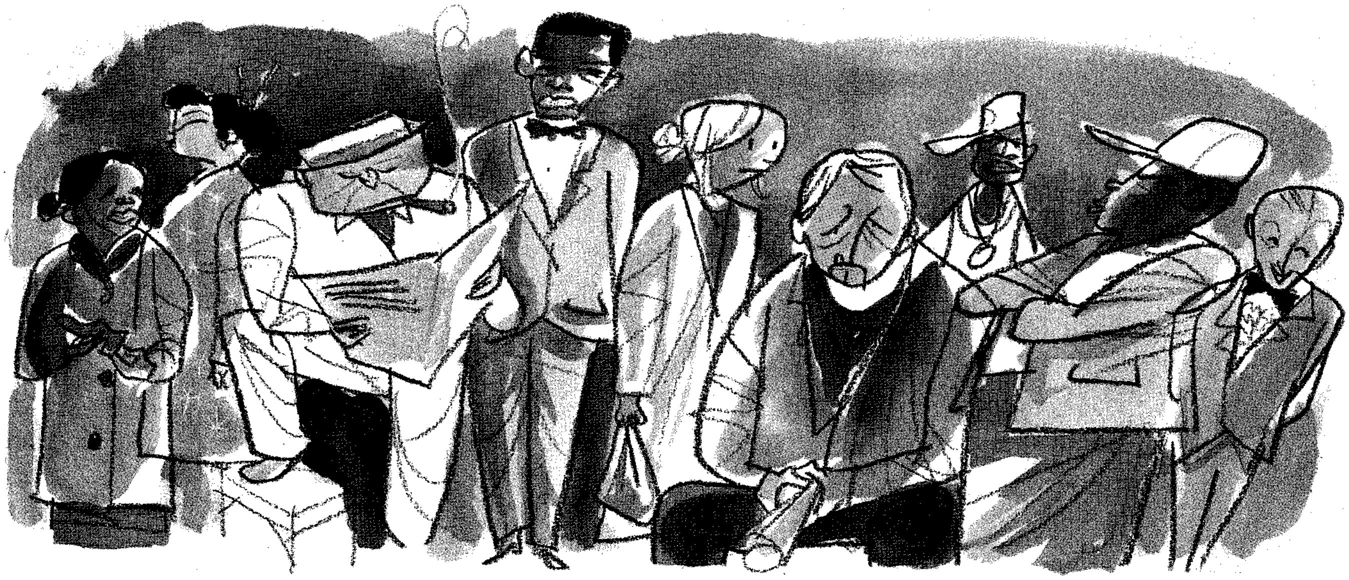
BLACK AND WHITE BALL

Studs Terkel and David Schwimmer on the racial divide.

BY HILTON ALS

About thirty minutes into Joy Gregory and David Schwimmer's adaptation of Studs Terkel's 1992 oral history "Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel About the American Obsession" (a Lookingglass Theatre Company première at the Water Tower Water Works, in Chicago), the moral heaviness of the production lifts for a moment, and we're given a glimpse of the errant form of humor that could have catapulted the show past the confines of theatre-as-sociology. In one of the skits into which the evening is divided, the maniacally upbeat host (Andrew White) of a game show called "Name That Stereotype," who wears his cheesiness as proudly as his loud blue-and-white jacket, introduces three contestants—a black man (Cedric Young), an Asian woman (Cheryl Hamada), and a white woman (Corryn Cummins)—who compete in a kind of race raffle by acting out our most unattractive preconceptions. First up, playing "white trash," is the gifted Cummins, whose comic ability is perfectly balanced by her lyrical humanism. She becomes a living embodiment of urban blight: a drug freak working a welfare scam who cares little, if at all, for her fellow-man. Just as we can almost picture her dirty trailer littered with beer cans and food stamps, a bell goes off, "Jeopardy" style, and she is followed by Young playing a watermelon-and-pig-foot-eating Stepin Fetchit ("I'll be happy to be your token darkie—why, heck, y'all can even put me on the Supreme Court if'n you want, so's y'all won't have to make any real changes. Dat'd be fine by me"), and then by Hamada's compliant geisha ("My name is Spicy Tuna but you can call me Lotus Blossom"). In her alluring red kimono, she giggles, eyes downcast, takes tiny pigeon steps across the stage to a white male audience member, bows, and starts to massage his feet. When she suspects that he's unsatisfied with her services, she becomes hysterical and commits hara-kiri. Better death than the dishonor of serving badly. The scene leaves us with questions, which unfortunately the rest of the show fails to answer: Where did these caricatures come from? How have racial stereotypes been promoted in our culture over the years? To what extent have we passively accepted them? How parochial are we? How naïve?

Satire assumes a common experience on the part of its audience—as well as common limitations. The urge to gnaw away at those limitations is what made the standup comedians Lenny Bruce and Richard Pryor philosophers of a sort. Neither set out to dissect the role of racism in our national consciousness, but each, in his own way, exposed bigotry. Schwimmer—who was one of the founders of the Lookingglass, and who directed the show and also stars in the television series "Friends"—borrows liberally from the conventions of standup comedy, as well as from sitcoms, Lily Tomlin's one-woman performances, and the playwright George C. Wolfe's unforgettable comedic treatise on race, "The Colored Museum." Schwimmer has produced a tight and entertaining show, but one whose technique is more sophisticated than its content, and whose didacticism comes off less as critical analysis than as a plea for the liberal cause.



Chicago's Lookingglass Theatre presents "Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel About the American Obsession."

The show opens in the dark to the swampy sounds of crickets chirping and water gurgling. As the lights come up, a commanding black woman in an old overcoat (Cheryl Lynn Bruce) circles the stage. She is Mamie Till Mobley, and she is telling the story of her fourteen-year-old son, Emmett Till, who was shot, beaten, and dumped in a swamp while visiting relatives in Money, Mis-

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sissippi, in 1955. Till was accused of whistling at a white woman. The charge may have been apocryphal, but the “justice” it engendered was not—his white assailants were acquitted after jurors deliberated for just over an hour. Defiant, Mrs. Mobley insisted that her son's battered and bloated body be shipped home to Chicago and openly displayed at his funeral, so that America could witness the real face of racism. This story—or, rather, the way it is played here—is instructive. Bruce is a fine actress, but she leans far too heavily on the idea of her character as a formidable, long-suffering black woman—which is in itself a stereotype. As it happens, the real Mrs. Mobley was a complicated figure, a small, light-skinned woman with a girlish flirtatiousness, who delighted in recounting the details of her life, with and without Emmett. To play her, Bruce channels instead Claudia McNeil's Bible-quoting, spiritual-humming matriarch in the 1961 film version of “A Raisin in the Sun”—an image of the black woman as paragon of moral virtue which Wolfe quite rightly satirized in a skit in “The Colored Museum” entitled “The Last Mama-on-the-Couch Play.” Bruce also appears as Ann Atwater, a fiery “domestic and activist” who is forced to negotiate school-integration policy with a white Klansman (Tony Fitzpatrick). Predictably, the two can't stand each other—not until they bond over their shared problems as low-income Americans. Now he “trusts blacks,” Atwater says with a smile at the end of the scene. It's a ludicrous and painful moment.

Schwimmer knows a lot about the attention span of the contemporary audience, and his seamless direction masks the fact that the play is made up of undeveloped fragments connected only by the subject of race. But one wishes that his ambition had been greater. While each segment is staged with theatrical imagination, none of the characters are written with enough subtlety for us truly to believe in them, and the script is full of missed opportunities. Schwimmer and Gregory could, for instance, have explored one of the great urban American stories: the ways in which blacks and Jews, ghettoized and living in close proximity, have been both united by their common history of oppression and divided by it. To be fair, “Race” does include one anecdote about two former high-school friends, Richie (Andrew White), who is Jewish, and Joseph (Reginald Nelson), who is black. “When the neighborhood was white, I used to get harassed and beaten up for being Jewish,” Richie says. “The guys who didn't like me for being Jewish definitely didn't like the blacks for being black. So when the black kids started to move in, I had immediate allies. . . . I was screwed up because I was a reverse racist. Blacks could do no harm.” But, as in Terkel's book, Joseph becomes a Farrakhan-following Muslim and an anti-assimilationist. We're shown Richie's feelings of rejection (“I have a hard time understanding what he's into”), but, in a scene that lasts less than ten minutes, there's no serious attempt to explore the paradigm.

Schwimmer and Gregory do incorporate elements that are not in Terkel's book (there are references to the 1992 beating of Reginald Denny, for instance, and to the 1998 dragging death of James Byrd, Jr.), and it would have been marvellous if they'd tossed away more of Terkel and incorporated other, more resonant voices on marginalization—Bernard Malamud or James Baldwin or James Agee, say, whose “Let Us Now Praise Famous Men” captured the racial divide with heartrending exactitude. But instead of voices we hear facts and figures: “Black males have the lowest life expectancy of any group in the United States,” one actor says. “Their unemployment rate is more than twice that of white males. Even black men with college degrees are three times more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts.” Another actor adds, “Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young black males. Since 1960, suicide rates for young black males have nearly tripled, and doubled for black females.” While this is distressing, it's information we look for in the *Times*, not in the theatre. What we want here is catharsis, which can lead to a change of heart or mind. What we get is Terkel's homilies, his pedestrian humanism, and a surface-level sociology that reflects the mind of an industrious but uninvested journalist. “Race” makes a powerful case for Schwimmer's potential as a director, but one hopes that next time he'll stage less perfunctory material. ♦

DANCING

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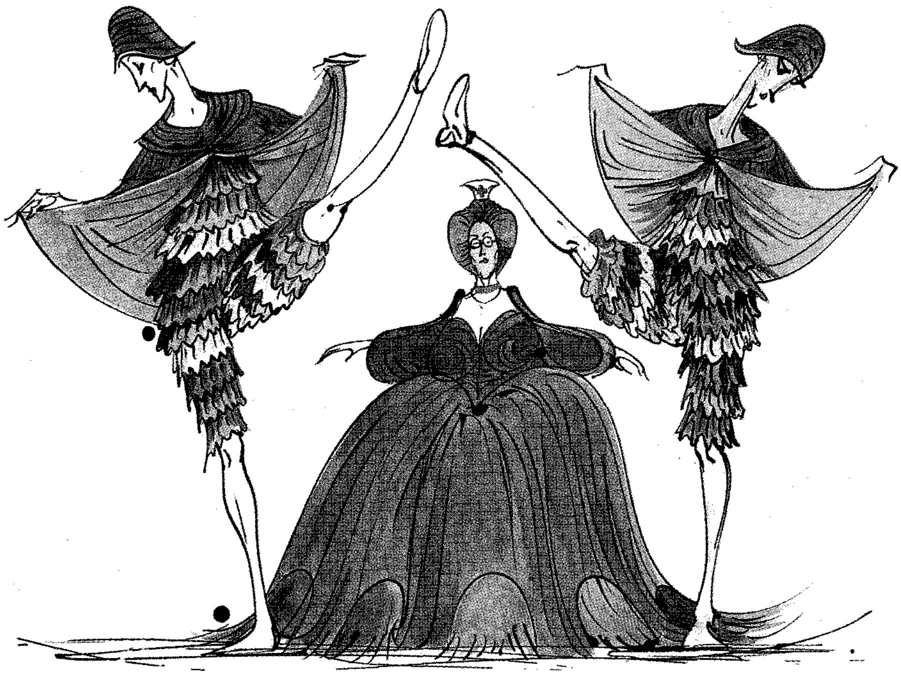
Seasons from American Ballet Theatre and New York City Ballet.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA



The elephant and the turtles from Christopher Wheeldon's "Carnival of the Animals."

GERALD SCARFE

On the surface, American Ballet Theatre looks as though it's becoming more and more like itself, a conservative opera-house troupe delivering the old-time religion—"Swan Lake," guest stars, multiple pirouettes—while now and then also putting on lame new pieces. Yet there does seem to be a change at A.B.T. since Kevin McKenzie took over as artistic director a decade ago. Basically, the classics are looking better and better, and the new ballets are getting worse.

I wonder if there is not another company history operating here. McKenzie grew up as a dancer in the Joffrey Ballet in the nineteen-seventies. The Joffrey still exists, in reduced form, in Chicago, but during the "dance boom" of the sixties and seventies it was an important New York troupe, with a curious repertory. On the one hand, it specialized in reviving excellent ballets from the early twentieth century—works by Frederick Ashton, Léonide Massine, Vaslav Nijinsky, and Michel Fokine, to name a few—which Robert Joffrey, the company's director, loved, and reconstructed with tender care. On the other hand, night after night these old beauties appeared on the same program with the dopey "youth" ballets of Gerald Arpino, the company's associate director. How could a company (or an audience) that liked Nijinsky's "Afternoon of a Faun" also like Arpino's "Trinity," with kids making out on the floor? I don't know, but the combination may have created a fruitful synergy. That is, Arpino's flower-power ballets may have given the young Joffrey dancers a feeling of validation (these were the generation-gap days), which then fuelled their commitment to the old pieces. Whatever they did, the Joffrey dancers performed as if they were on fire.

Now look at McKenzie's A.B.T. How could a director who last spring presented Ashton's "La Fille Mal Gardée" and "The Dream"—both hands-down masterpieces—have produced, in the following season, the new "Within You Without You," in which the dancers jogged around in jeans to George Harrison songs? Well, remember the Joffrey. Arpino did not choreograph "Within You Without You," but it sure looked like his work. As for the Ashton ballets, they were revived by the Joffrey before they were picked up by McKenzie. A.B.T. may even be profiting from a Joffrey-style energy transfer. In all the repertory—the treasures, the trash—the dancers perform with what seems a burning belief in their material.

This makes for superb renderings of the older ballets. So should we just take our half a loaf and go home? I guess so, but really, the other half is very bad. This season, by way of new work, the company brought forth an evening-long bag of wind called "HereAfter," with a cast of forty-five, a chorus of a hundred and twenty, and what looked like about a million dollars' worth of sets (including a space module) and costumes by Santo Loquasto. The ballet even had two choreographers—Natalie Weir, the resident choreographer of the Australian Ballet, and Stanton Welch, another Australian, who was recently named the artistic director of Houston Ballet—working with two separate scores: John Adams's "Harmonium," for Weir's Part 1, and Carl Orff's warhorse "Carmina Burana," for Welch's Part 2. Despite the split authorship, both parts seemed to have been choreographed by a teen-ager who had just read Khalil Gibran. According to the program notes, Weir's section was about the "examination of one's life"; Welch's, about the "journey of a man's life." In each, a bare-chested fellow called the Man—Marcelo Gomes as Weir's Man, Ethan Stiefel as Welch's, in the cast I saw—appeared before us. He soon met up with various women, of the sacred and profane varieties, and he had intense experiences, which looked sometimes like the Stations of the Cross and sometimes like sexual intercourse. At the end of Part 1, the Man died. At the end of Part 2, the other Man died, whereupon the first Man reappeared (the eternal return), at the top of a staircase. Then the curtain came down at last.

The two halves were not exactly alike. Weir's was more boring, Welch's more foolish, with great troops of people charging around in neo-Aztec wear. But

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both employed the same style, “muscle ballet,” in which classical dance is used not for its intricate language—the positions, the grammar, the logic—but for its flash steps, its jumps and turns, which then serve to decorate what is essentially bad modern dance. The night I went, Ethan Stiefel broke A.B.T.'s innocent-conviction rule. He seemed to know that he had come to the wrong party. (And that's not to mention how his “idyllic love,” Gillian Murphy, reacted when, in one of Welch's ballet-updatings, she was required to execute a full turn while kneeling on Stiefel's chest. She fumbled it, of course, and then looked as though she wanted to strangle somebody.) But most of the others performed this big, stupid piece with all their hearts. They must have been saddened by the reviews. Even the *Times*, which ordinarily defends any A.B.T. première, panned it. The debacle was not entirely Weir and Welch's fault. As Kevin McKenzie told the press, the idea for a ballet combining the Orff and the Adams scores was his. So was the title. “HEREAFTER WILL CHANGE YOU,” the ads proclaimed. I don't know about us, but the piece may have changed A.B.T. Last week, the company's executive director, its third in three years, resigned.

As A.B.T. gets more innocent, for better and for worse, New York City Ballet gets more sophisticated, for worse. Peter Martins, N.Y.C.B.'s artistic director, apparently breathed a sigh of relief when, as a young man, he moved from the Royal Danish Ballet, with its dance dramas about sylphs and gnomes, to City Ballet, where George Balanchine had laid down the principle that dance didn't need a story, that the story was in the steps. Eventually, Martins took over, and since then he has been creating ballets in which there are lots of steps, and no story. Last season, for the Richard Rodgers centenary, he created a piece, “Thou Swell,” for four couples, to a medley of Rodgers's love songs. This was not a hard task, but, as usual, Martins's choreography was so knotted, so full of second and third thoughts, that it communicated almost nothing except its own complication. This season, Martins followed up “Thou Swell” with another duets ballet—“Guide to Strange Places,” to a rousing score by John Adams—but this time the couples, instead of putatively falling in love, got divorced. Out of five dark doorways came five frantic pairs, who then stormed and grappled and once again did the hardest things, for the least discernible reason, that I have ever seen on a ballet stage. One woman was hauled backward by her thigh as she stood on point in arabesque. Another was partnered as she knelt on one foreleg. (I can't remember where her other leg was. Around her neck?) After completing this without injuring themselves, the dancers all ran back through the dark doors.

Over these cold shores, however, one soft wind is blowing. Two years ago, Martins appointed Christopher Wheeldon, a young Englishman, as the company's resident choreographer. It is hard to see what Martins likes in Wheeldon, for the two could not be more different. Wheeldon is a natural as a ballet-maker. He knows how to fill the stage with an ensemble, and have the dancers surge and pulse and make you wonder what's coming next. He knows how to give steps meaning. Indeed, he often makes forthright story ballets, but even when he's working without a narrative his tone is still human, engaging. In consequence, the dancers—who, like us, are grateful to know what the ballet is about—look happy in his work. They glow, they grow. The recent advancement of Alexandra Ansanelli, a not-too-pure but vivid little firecracker, is probably due to the fact that Wheeldon admired her, and cast her. Last month, she was made a principal.

So Wheeldon has all the old-fashioned virtues that Martins seems to disdain. Why, then, did Martins choose him? I have a theory. Balanchine, the great abstractionist, selected the Broadway-bred Jerome Robbins to be his company's second choreographer, partly, it seems, because Robbins was so different from him, because he made story ballets and jokey ballets and topical ballets—pieces, in other words, that would give the audience some relief from the platonic beams of his own work. Martins may see Wheeldon as his Robbins.

Wheeldon is filling the role, doing the “assignments.” For the Rodgers centenary, Martins, in “Thou Swell,” com-

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mandeered most of the company's stars and, from the look of it, most of the set-and-costume money. Then Wheeldon, in a plain-frock piece called "Carousel (A Dance)," put on something that actually communicated the romantic psychology of the Rodgers hits. With a showman's knack, he reduced "Carousel" to a first encounter between Julie Jordan (Ansanelli) and Billy Bigelow (Damian Woetzel), with the corps behind them, and gave them a beautiful pas de deux, which culminated in Julie's simply hurling herself into Billy's arms from a double pirouette in attitude. I shouldn't say "simply"—it was a perilous step, and she had to do it several times—but its meaning was simple: "I love you."

This season, Wheeldon took on what I assume was another assignment, the creation of a children's ballet, "Carnival of the Animals," to Saint-Saëns's score. It was a very cute piece, with a narration, written and spoken by John Lithgow, in which a boy (P. J. Verhoest, eleven years old, from the School of American Ballet) hides out overnight in the Museum of Natural History and sees each of the animals—the lion, the elephants, the turtles—as people from his own life. My favorite was the swan: the boy's great-aunt, who, the narrator tells us, was once a dancer and who now, in a cocktail dress and with a certain creepy glamour reminiscent of Norma Desmond, performs a this-is-how-I-did-it version of "The Dying Swan." The psychology was perhaps too subtle. (This piece is not likely to replace Robbins's "Fanfare" at the family matinées.) The same can be said of "Liturgy," a darkly lit duet, to an Arvo Pärt score, that Wheeldon put on later in the season for two of his favorite dancers, Wendy Whelan and Jock Soto. "Carousel" notwithstanding, Wheeldon sometimes gets overcomplicated in his pas de deux. I sense the influence of his boss here, but it's also possible that he's just working too fast, and putting in every idea he has. I needed only five, not fifteen, different ways for Whelan to splay her body across Soto's. Still, the tone—grave, companionate, we've-been-together-for-years—never faltered. That's what you can't fake, and what gave the piece its seriousness. At other companies, one gets tired of the "human touch"—give us some dancing!—but at City Ballet we're dying for it. ♦

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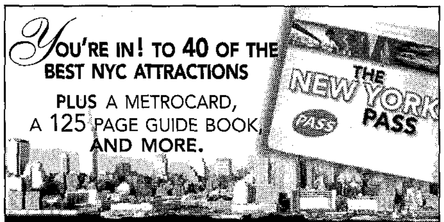

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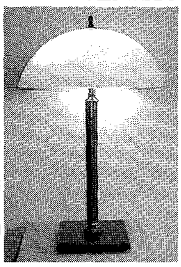

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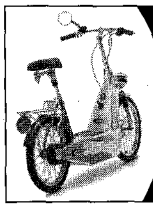

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BOOKS

AMERICAN ELECTRIC

Did Franklin fly that kite?

BY ADAM GOPNIK

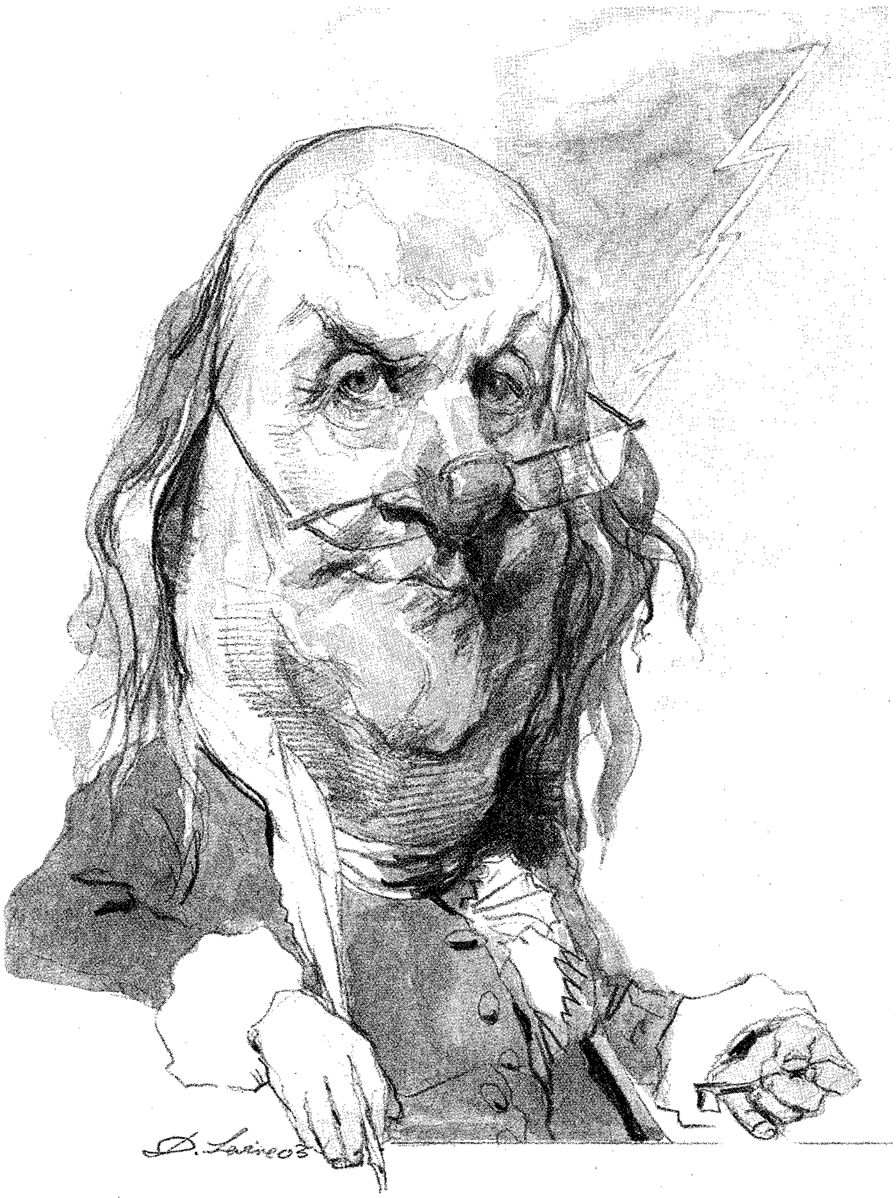
We are said to be living in an icon-smashing age, but the odd thing is how few shards can be found on the floor. Joe DiMaggio may now be chilly and Bing Crosby charmless, but the essential pantheon of heroes remains in place. Lincoln, John Adams, Lewis and Clark, Seabiscuit—those who matter most to us are intact, and the common activity is not to smash their images but to trace on them, as though with a diamond pen, the signature of our own favored flaws, allowing their heroism to shine through more brightly. The thrust of popular history has been to remake old heroes as more like us than we knew, and better than us than we could imagine. (Even John Kennedy, if sicker than we recognized, was braver, too.) The Founding Fathers have been remade as Founding Brothers, our superior siblings.

Of them all, Benjamin Franklin seems the most secure, since he has always been the most "human," the one Founding Father who has no trace of asceticism, neither Massachusetts Puritan nor Virginia Neo-Roman. He is all godless materialist Pennsylvania merchant (although he borrowed some simplicity from the Quakers from time to time, as the need suited him). You could swing a baseball bat of propriety at him, and he would bounce back, beaming. This gives him, and his legend, endless vitality. If you were a child growing up in Philadelphia in the nineteen-sixties, Franklin was still alive, everywhere you looked. At night, his electric profile, wattles outlined in neon, hovered above the city in the sign for the Benjamin Franklin Hotel. He was known in Philadelphia the way St. Francis was known in Assisi, as both presiding deity and local boy.

Central to his myth was the story of the Kite and Key. (An honors society at the University of Pennsylvania still has that name.) He went out to a field in a thunderstorm, flew his kite, saw it struck by lightning, and then watched the lightning sparkle around a key held in a jar at the end of the kite twine. If he put his knuckle on the twine, he could feel the spark. What this accomplished, exactly, was something that schoolboys were vague about: "He discovered electricity" was the usual formula. In fact, he had shown that lightning was a form of electricity, and that ingenuity could hold its own against book learning. In one of the two greatest editorial emendations in American letters (the other is Maxwell Perkins keeping Fitzgerald from calling "Gatsby" "Trimalchio in West Egg"), Franklin changed Jefferson's "We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable" to the modest, conclusive "We hold these truths to be self-evident"—and Franklin could make that change because he was known as the master of self-evidence, with all the authority of a man willing to face down lightning with a kite while everyone else was safe inside arguing about ideas. "He Took Lightning from the Sky and the Scepter from the Tyrant's Hand" was the (originally Latin) inscription that a French poet would later offer, conclusively.

Now, however, a new book argues that the legend on which Franklin's reputation rests is dubious. There was no kite, no key, no bolt, no knuckle, no charge. He let people believe that he had been places he never went, done things he never did, and seen things that never happened. No wonder he's been called the father of American journalism.

The new book, "Bolt of Fate," by Tom Tucker (Public Affairs; $25), is part of an apparently unstoppable wave of Franklin biography. In the past three years, we have had Edmund S. Morgan's short, loving "Benjamin Franklin" (Yale; $24.95) and H. W. Brands's "The First American" (Doubleday; $35), and this month Walter Isaacson's energetic, entertaining, and worldly "Benjamin Franklin: An American Life" (Simon & Schuster; $30) joins them. Two more Franklin biographies are supposedly on the way. Tucker's book, it



A new book argues that there was no kite, no key, no jar, no lightning bolt, no charge.

should be said, is not so much a wet blanket cast over the party as an "Aw, nuts" uttered at it: his evidence is far from conclusive, but neither does his book have any of the usual telltale signs of overreaching, special pleading, paranoia, or conspiracy-mongering. This is Franklin unmasked, but not, so to speak, Franklin dressed up in women's clothing. True or false, Tucker's argument touches on the heart of who Franklin was, who we want him to be, and who he might have been. "*Eripuit coelo fulmen*"—he snatched the lightning from the sky. What if, just conceivably, he didn't?

There are no bad biographies of Franklin for the same reason that there are no bad Three Stooges movies, or, for that matter, demolition derbies: *something* always happens. Just when Franklin is getting becalmed in diplomatic squabbles, say, or running a tedious printing business in a provincial city, he writes about farts or invents bifocals. Yet there is, even in Isaacson's genial book and Morgan's almost hagiographic one, a sense that this figure is seen at a distance, and remains hard to know. Where John Adams comes before us in all his bad-tempered intelligence, and Washington in his thin-lipped realism, Franklin is elusive: he can at times be Santa Claus or William James, bubbly and intelligent, and at times he is Franklin Roosevelt, with a carefully composed affability overlaying a character essentially calculating and remote.

In part, this is because he had to adapt to two different times, one of which, at least, he helped to make. His career, as Isaacson suggests, bridges two centuries of sensibility: in the first half of his life, up until the seventeen-fifties, we are in a largely seventeenth-century world of nascent capitalism and virtuous upward mobility. Franklin is an ambitious early capitalist operator at the edge of the empire, a provincial Pepys. He starts a business from scratch and chases women, and both the culture and the science around him feel skin-thin. By the end of the Franklin biographies, we are in a late-Enlightenment world of fully fledged science and sensibility—where the reign of violence and feeling is beginning. This is partly a question of place, Philadelphia traded for Paris, but it is also an effect of growing knowledge and an expanded universe, and science is the crossing point. The electrical experiments are the link between the early Franklin and the later Franklin—between the young striver and the Papa Savant.

Franklin was born in Boston in 1706, to a family of freethinking artisans, and was apprenticed as a boy to his half brother James, a printer. A printer in those Colonial days often had his own newspaper, and James's was the *New England Courant*, America's first independent paper. Benjamin picked up the newspapering habit—for a brief period, still an adolescent, he ran the paper while his brother was in jail over a censorship dispute. But he disliked his brother ("I fancy his harsh and tyrannical treatment of me might be a means of impressing me with that aversion to arbitrary power that has stuck to me through my whole life," he wrote years later) and, at seventeen, ran away to Philadelphia, a village of two thousand people that nonetheless dreamed of itself as a metropolis of tolerance. Compared with Mathered Boston, it was.

Franklin, tall and physically formidable—he was a terrific swimmer and runner—almost immediately brought himself to the center of Philadelphia life. He earned a reputation as the publisher and editor of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, a newspaper begun by a printer whom he helped drive out of business. Like Dr. Johnson, his almost exact contemporary, he made his way by sheer force of talent as a miscellaneous journalist; unlike the bulldoggish Dr. Johnson, he understood, and pioneered, the American principle that it pays to be liked. "The consummate networker," as Isaacson calls him, he turned a little circle of fellow-apprentices and small tradesmen, the Junto, into a kind of freewheeling all-purpose civic association. He was a funny writer, with a dry, pawky prose style, modelled on Addison's, and a taste for pseudonymous pranks; he hid his most acerbic opinions behind the masks of made-up characters. But he had world-class ambitions, and he understood that those ambitions were probably best served by achievement in natural philosophy—the sciences. No one in London gave a damn about Philadelphia politics, but they cared about Philadelphia lightning. Distance lends authority to experiments: if it can be done out there, it can be done anywhere.

Franklin had just given up his career as a printer when he began his work as an "electrician," fascinated by the small shocks you could make out of amber rods and glass jars. Electricity was not yet a serious science. Though everyone agreed that it was a phenomenon, no one was sure at first if it was a phenomenon like the hula hoop or a phenomenon like gravity. People played with it for fun. Then, in the seventeen-forties, the Leyden jar, an early capacitor, showed that an electrical charge could be held in place and made to pass through glass. Essentially, you could collect and store electricity; and in 1749 Franklin reported to the Royal Academy in London that he had created the first electric battery.

In his correspondence with the academy, he understood that he would inevitably be viewed as a provincial, and that it paid to play the clown a little. In the midst of his serious submissions, he also wrote to the academy, apropos the state of "American electricity," that "a turkey is to be killed for our dinners by the electrical shock, and roasted by the electrical jack, before a fire kindled by the electrified bottle, when the healths of all the famous electricians in England, France and Germany, are to be drank in electrified bumpers, under the discharge of guns from the electrical battery." The metropolis, while it mistrusts an upstart, forgives a lovable provincial eccentric. (Though he was being funny about the American enthusiasm for electricity, he wasn't entirely joking. He electrocuted at least one turkey, and boasted of how tender it was, a thing typical of the way he could turn a joke into a fact.)

Previously, it had been proposed that there were two different kinds of electricity, both fluid: one generated by glass and one generated by resin. Franklin, experimenting with varieties of electric shock, swiftly arrived at a fundamental insight: that electricity was a single fluid, and that what he was the first to call "positive" and "negative" charges came from having too much or too little of it. The importance of Franklin's theory, as the great historian of science I. Bernard Cohen has shown, was not only that it insisted on the conservation of charge but that it accepted "action at a distance": there didn't have to be holes for the charge to pass through, or invisible levers in the sky to send it along; electricity was just there, like gravity.

Many people, whatever theory they held, had noticed that lightning in the sky looked a lot like electricity in a jar, only there was more of it. In 1749, it seems, Franklin himself made a list of the resemblances, a list that reveals the tenor of his scientific mind, at once disarmingly particular and searching for unity: "Electrical fluid agrees with lightning in these particulars. 1. Giving light. 2. Color of the light. 3. Crooked direction. 4. Swift motion. 5. Being conducted by metals. 6. Crack or noise in exploding. 7. Subsisting in water or ice. . . . Since they agree in all particulars wherein we can already compare them, is it not probable they agree likewise in this? Let the experiment be made." The lightning experiment would be suggestive about the centrality of electricity in an essentially Newtonian world picture. The simpler the world picture, the less intricate the celestial mechanics, and the greater the play of universal forces, however bizarre their action. *E pluribus unum* applied—a motto that Franklin, once again running from the absurd to the solemn, took from a classical recipe for salad dressing.

Did he really do it? There were actually two experiments. In 1750, Franklin proposed that if you could get up high enough to be above trees and other natural obstacles, on a steeple or a spire, safely insulated in a sentry box (about the size of a telephone booth), you might be able to draw electricity from a thundercloud through a long iron rod, and "determine whether the clouds that contain lightning are electrified or not." A group of French scientists who read the proposal—for all that it took six weeks for mail to cross the Atlantic, there was a constant and meaningful exchange of ideas and data—tried it, in a town called Marly, outside Paris, and found that it worked. (Significantly, the apparatus didn't function right away—no experiment ever really works the first time you try it, for the same reason that no child's toy ever works on Christmas morning, the first time you assemble it—and it was a fairly lowly assistant who eventually made the discovery.)

Well, if you didn't have a steeple or a spire, you could use a kite to make the same experiment, with a key attached at a silk ribbon to the twine on the kite; the key and the twine would conduct the electricity. Franklin published an account of this experiment—which took place, if it did, sometime in 1752—in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and it is worth quoting, for its clarity and for its odd future tenses. After some details about the construction of the kite, which is to be made of a "large thin silk handkerchief," Franklin explains:

> The kite is to be raised, when a thunder-gust appears to be coming on, (which is very frequent in this country) and the person, who holds the string, must stand within a door, or window, or under some cover, so that the silk riband may not be wet. . . . As soon as any of the thunder-clouds come over the kite, the pointed wire will draw the electric fire from them; and the kite, with all the twine, will be electrified; and the loose filaments of the twine will stand out every way, and be attracted by the approaching finger. When the rain has wet the kite and twine, so that it can conduct the electric fire freely, you will find it stream out plentifully from the key on the approach of your knuckle. . . . All the other electrical experiments [can] be performed, which are usually done by the help of a rubbed glass globe or tube, and thereby the sameness of the electric matter with that of lightning completely demonstrated.

The first thing to note is that there is no bolt of lightning. Lightning, as Tucker points out, is a weird phenomenon. You won't find it by waiting in a field, and, if you did, it might fry you like a turkey; it would certainly vaporize the twine. What Franklin was trying to get was the electrostatic energy in clouds, which is usually there.

The next thing to note is the conditional spirit in which Franklin tells the story: he doesn't say he did it; he says that it can be done. This, Tucker notes, is not the era's usual scientific style, and in other cases Franklin is very careful, to the fetishistic degree beloved of eighteenth-century science, to say exactly what, when, and how. Tucker writes, "In his letter to George Whatley, an old London friend, describing the invention of bifocal glasses and in his 'Description of an Instrument for Taking Down Books from High Shelves' Franklin is unambiguous: he invented both items, he writes at length, he gives specifics, he uses active voice, he offers diagrams, *he says he did it*." In this first account, anyway, he doesn't.

The third thing to note is how hard it is to do. Tucker argues that a kite made of the kind of handkerchief that would have been available (a thirty-inch square of lingerie-thin silk), dragging a standard chunky key of the time (a quarter-pound brass latchkey), would have been nearly impossible to fly in the first place, especially if you were trying to keep it aloft from inside a shed—you can't get the key out and up. (Tucker notes that the job of keeping the key from falling to the ground while you're still flying the kite—and doing both from inside some kind of box—is one that has defeated the imagination of every illustrator, including Currier & Ives, who put Franklin's hand above the key, on the electrified twine, to support the weight.) He says that he himself tried the experiment and couldn't get the kite off the ground: "My wife held a large picture frame as a stand-in for a window frame. When I tried to keep the key safely on my side of the picture frame and 'dry' and not let the line brush against the frame, especially with the reduced handling caused by the dangling key, there came the sudden realization: *He-really-didn't-do-this*." Which may have been a good thing. Tucker says that the experiment was also fantastically dangerous, and Franklin was lucky not to get killed trying to do it, if he did it.

Isaacson, for his part, rejects Tucker, and sensibly directs us toward Cohen's books on Franklin's science. Cohen notes that other people claimed to have reproduced the experiment not long afterward, but for Cohen perhaps the most important consideration in its favor is the simple fact that Franklin said that he did it. The idea that Franklin might have made up his account is simply alien to his conception of Franklin.

Who is to decide when doctors disagree? It is, finally, as conservatives like to say, all about character. And here one approaches an area of subtle gradations, easy to misinterpret. Tucker points to evidence of Franklin's series of hoaxes as conclusive, or anyway highly suggestive. He offers a long list and shows how they often advanced Franklin's career; for instance, when he was just starting out as a printer he wrote a pseudonymous essay in favor of paper currency and then, after the legislature had been persuaded, got the government contract to print money. As Tucker recognizes, the majority of these impostures are closer to deadpan satiric jokes than they are to self-seeking lies. Franklin liked to write letters claiming to be from other people—a "famous Jesuit," or a Scottish Presbyterian—in order to dramatize some political point through obvious overload. The last thing he wrote was a letter purportedly from a Muslim slaver, "Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim," whose lust for slavery was intended to hold a mirror up to the American slaveholder's own, and shame him.

This is the reason for Franklin's opacity and, perhaps, for the doubts about the kite, which do not begin with Tucker. Franklin was an instinctive ironist. That is not to make him contemporary; it was Enlightenment irony, not Duchampian irony—begun as a way of getting past censorship. But it was his natural mode, as in the joke about the

"Frankly, I never would've figured you for an S.U.V. person."

electrocuted turkeys: which *was* a joke, and had a serious point, and was something he actually did, and the whole thing depended on being reported with an absolutely straight face. It was not that he did not value honesty. He did. It is that he did not value sincerity, a different thing. He would have been reluctant to say something that he believed to be a lie. But, as a businessman and a writer and a diplomat, he might very well have been willing to dramatize, or even overdramatize, something he believed to be essentially the truth.

Everyone, doubters and believers, meets in Paris, for what all can agree on is that the image of Franklin, the American electrician, was more essential to his success as a diplomat in France than any other element of his legend. By 1776, Franklin was, of course, a very senior American, and his tastes and allegiances, which throughout his life had been almost passionately English and imperial, seemed fully formed. He came home from a long posting to London as a representative of the Pennsylvania legislature, and was immediately asked to join the first Congress. He was, at the start, suspected by the more radical patriots of being a "wet," if not actually a spy. (His son William, with whom he was said to have done the kite-flying, was then the loyal Tory governor of New Jersey.) But he soon proved to be as ardently in favor of unilateral independence as Adams or Jefferson. ("He does not hesitate at our boldest Measures, but rather seems to think us too irresolute," John wrote to Abigail, perpetually annoyed at Franklin's gift for arriving late at a party and then lighting all the candles on the cake.) And, when it became plain that the war for independence would live or die on French aid, he was the obvious candidate to go to France and ask for it. "There can be no question that when Franklin arrived in France on that grave mission he was already a public figure," Cohen writes. "And this was so because of his stature as a scientist and because of the spectacular nature of his work on lightning." We may have thought we were sending over Will Rogers; they thought they were getting Richard Feynman.

Franklin's essentially ironic, distancing turn of mind, which was often so baffling to his literal-minded American colleagues—Isaacson's funniest pages are supplied by John Adams's stunned and alarmed accounts of Franklin's nonchalant diplomacy on the Paris mission—gave him a kind of second sight into the minds of his hosts. There is little sham in French life, but a lot of show, a lot of rhetorical gesturing. Franklin understood the style instantly. He was pretending to be a naïf (he left his wig and powder, which he normally wore, back home in Philadelphia), which the French knew to be faux, and they were pretending to be worldly, which he knew to be an illusion.

Franklin was not just shrewder than he seemed, having the measure of his host very well down. He was also politically far more skillful. As Morgan points out, there was no necessity for the French to side with the Americans, whose cause looked like the longest of long shots and involved making league with a frankly king-hating new republic. Adams and the ornery Arthur Lee, another member of the French mission, were exasperated by Franklin's attention to social trivia. Why didn't he just bluntly insist on the power political formula that stared them in the face? America is the enemy of England, England is the enemy of France. Franklin understood that the "realistic" formula was essentially empty, and that there was, and is, no more maddeningly fatuous cliché than that nations have interests rather than affections. It was in France's interest to supplant the British, against its interest to support a republic, in its interest to form an alliance with the Spanish and leave the Americans alone, and on and on. But the logic of power depends largely on the perceptions, and feelings, of the people who have it. Franklin understood that, above all, the good opinion of the French mattered. It paid to be liked and admired, and he made sure that he was. He knew that he could not make his country, and its needs, inescapable if he did not make himself, and his cause, irresistible.

Was Franklin, because he was calculating and clear-eyed, a fraud? Nothing seems more false. Might he have, in the American, or, for that matter, the electrical, cause, massaged the data in what he thought was the pursuit of truth, or told a half-truth and then been enclosed within it? Nothing seems more human.

One need not have a pragmatic or skeptical vision of truth to have a charitable view of the frailty of those who pursue it. The electrical kite could never have really been a hoax, because it was never really a claim. Even if the experiment did take place, it would not, on its own, have counted as scientific data by any standard, Enlightenment or modern. There was no specification, no replication by the experimenter, no protocol. It was, really, a thought experiment: if you did this, then what might happen? Despite all the rhetoric, much of it self-created, of Franklin as natural man, pragmatic man, empirical man, man with a kite, the plain truth is that his genius was, in every realm, for airy abstraction brought to earth, the single-fluid theory of life.

Franklin the political theorist was not drawing on his own experience, either, which consisted entirely of more or less slavish negotiations with colonial powers and absolute monarchs. He was, in the end, proposing a system of governance that no one had experienced at all. It was a pure thought experiment, a kite that might fly.

The moral of the kite is not that truth is relative. It is that nothing is really self-evident. Scientific truths, like political beliefs, are guesses and arguments, not certainties. Dr. Johnson's great, comforting gloss on the Christian funeral service comes to mind: "In the sure and certain hope of a resurrection" did not mean that the resurrection was certain, only that the hope was certain. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," similarly, means that we hold them to be so. We hold these truths as we hold the twine, believing, without being sure, that the tugs and shocks are what we think they are. We hold the string, and hope for the best. Often, there is no lightning. Sometimes, there is no kite. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Chestertown (Md.) Kent County News.

Donald David Cothin, 45, Millington, on April 15 was charged with possession of cocaine after he complained to police that the cocaine he had purchased was not authentic.

Police were conducting enforcement efforts on Route 313 in the area of Route 291, Millington, after receiving numerous complaints of illegal drug activity, according to a press release from the Centreville barrack.

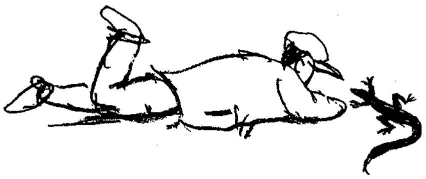
It is alleged that at 8 p.m., Cothin flagged down Tfc Stacy Hoon to complain about the drugs he had purchased and to say he wanted his money back.

BRIEFLY NOTED

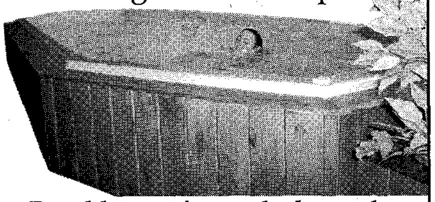
The Clearing, *by Tim Gautreaux (Knopf; $23).* In the years just after the First World War, two brothers find themselves beset by rains, vipers, and gangsters. Randolph, the younger and stodgier of the two, has been sent by their father, a censorious Pittsburgh timber baron, to track down Byron, the family favorite. Byron turns up in a sawmill sunk in the middle of a rank Louisiana swamp, but his experiences in the war have changed him from a swashbuckling rogue into a half-mad, sentimental thug, whose only pleasure is listening to scratchy ballads on a dilapidated Victrola. Randolph soon becomes enmeshed in his brother's violent world, and Gautreaux, like some Bayou Conrad, manages to combine verbal luxuriance and swift, brutal action to devastating effect.

The Photograph, *by Penelope Lively (Viking; $24.95).* Scrounging around in a cupboard stuffed with three decades' worth of papers and academic debris, Glyn Peters, a recently widowed landscape historian, discovers an envelope marked "Don't Open—Destroy" in his late wife's handwriting. Is there anyone on earth who would obey such an injunction? Certainly not Glyn, who opens the envelope to find a photograph of his beautiful, feckless wife hand in hand with her sister's husband. Determined to understand his wife's affair, he delves into her past with a historian's tenacity and a good deal more interest in her than he managed to muster while she was alive. This search branches out to encompass a small circle of friends, all of whom have a share in the narration. But Lively doesn't stop there, and her characters' questions about the dead woman provoke questions about themselves and the roles they played in her life.

Turner, *by James Hamilton (Random House; $35).* Showered with honors from the time he was in his teens, J. M. W. Turner had few setbacks in his long career as England's finest Romantic landscape painter. But the secret of his success, Hamilton suggests in this lively biography, had almost as much to do with an outsized gift for self-promotion as with artistic talent. From cocksure student to arrogant academician, Turner emerges as a greedy, status-obsessed egotist whose revolutionary treatment of light and color was offset by a good deal of bad poetry, not to mention bad manners. If the artist's self-avowed ambition was to surpass Claude Lorraine, he showed equal aptitude for dealing real estate, playing off patrons, and neglecting his family—his mentally disturbed mother died forgotten in an asylum. Still, for Hamilton no personal flaw can mar a world-class talent, and Turner escapes with his legacy intact, remaining, as he described himself, "the great lion of the day."



All the Stops, *by Craig R. Whitney (Public Affairs; $30).* In the nineteen-twenties, the pipe organ proliferated in churches, concert halls, theatres, and department stores, and no mansion was complete without one. But today the King of Instruments is a monarch that few people ever see or hear and even most musicians know little about. Whitney, a *Times* editor and amateur organist, deftly chronicles the twentieth-century battle for the "soul" of this most complex of musical beasts, fought among great American manufacturers like Ernest M. Skinner, a scrappy New Englander who perfected the big "orchestral" organ of the late Romantics, and G. Donald Harrison, whose American Classic model became a force in the back-to-the-Baroque movement. These divergent styles were reflected in the playing of virtuosos such as Virgil Fox, whose flamboyant "Heavy Organ" tours in the seventies were sold-out, marijuana-filled follies, and the dapper, straitlaced E. Power Biggs. Whitney extolls the organ's eclectic heritage at a time when the instrument seems poised for a return to the mainstream, and his glossary of its colorful terminology will help novices tell a windchest from a bombarde.



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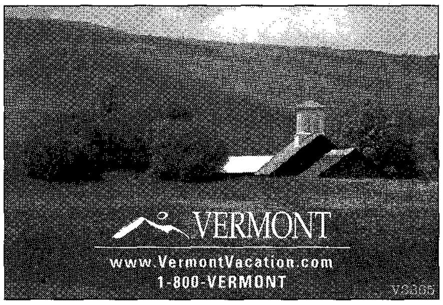

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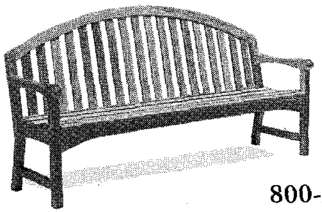

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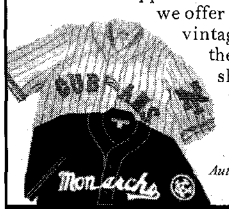

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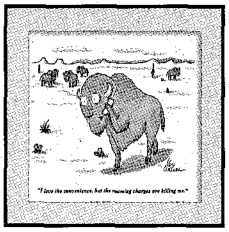

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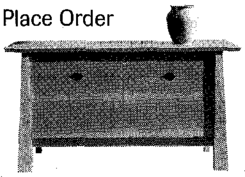

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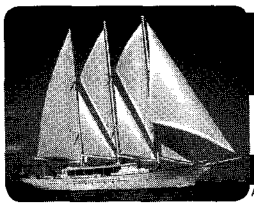

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

DAYS OF PLAGUE

"28 Days Later" and "Bonhoeffer."

BY ANTHONY LANE

To those of us who believe that movies should thrive on the fleeting gesture and encourage a healthy suspicion of the grand, the new British horror film "28 Days Later" will come as good news. "Do you want us to find a cure and save the world or just fall in love and fuck?" Such are the interesting options that Selena (Naomie Harris) puts to Jim (Cillian Murphy) as they tramp the silent streets of London. These two, who have just met, are among a handful of the uninfected. The rest of the city—and, we gather, of England and other nations—has been blighted by an enraging plague, helpfully described as "something in the blood." More often than not, you catch it from a bite, and then, within twenty seconds, you start frothing at the mouth and try to bite the person next to you. Anybody who has ever tried speed dating will recognize the symptoms.

Only emaciated zombies are left, aimlessly seeking whom they may devour. Otherwise, the place is vacant, which means that, to Selena and Jim, it is both vacuum and playground—they can go where they like and take what they want, while realizing that the old ideas of liking and wanting, in the absence of a community, have dwindled into scraps. Danny Boyle's movie, written by Alex Garland, keeps touching nervously on this blankness. "You'll never read a book that hasn't already been written, or see a film that hasn't already been shot," Selena says to Jim, unaware that some of us would regard that as a blessed release. The mood lifts when she and Jim seek refuge, in a high-rise, with Frank (Brendan Gleeson) and his teen-age daughter, Hannah (Megan Burns). Frank is a London taxi-driver, and he isn't going to let a small matter like the annihilation of humanity put him off his stride. His apartment is rigged with Christmas lights, and the assembled company toasts its continued existence with a bottle of crème de menthe. "Good people," Jim says of his hosts, and Selena looks at him as if to say, What's so good about *good*?

They all leave town in a black cab—not before Frank has cheerfully set the meter running. This being a horror flick, nobody is smart enough to avoid moments of incalculable dumbness, and only Frank knows why he chooses to take the zombie-infested tunnel under the Thames rather than the nice empty bridge over it. From here on, the movie, too, loses its way, reminding us what an unrepentantly urban director Boyle is, happiest on familiar ground. He seemed stranded by "The Beach," and then fazed by the wide spaces of America and of Cameron Diaz in "A Life Less Ordinary," whereas Ewan McGregor's tumble down the toilet, in "Trainspotting," was a beautifully grim fantasia on the homegrown junkie. There is a famous scene in that film when McGregor and his scabby friends leave Edinburgh and chastise the great outdoors for its unpolluted dullness. This makes it all the more bizarre to watch Jim and *his* friends, in "28 Days Later," standing amid the ruins of an English abbey, while white horses canter past and choirs chant a requiem on the soundtrack. Come on, guys. It's not the end of the world.

Our heroes arrive at a large house, where they are first protected, then threatened, by a group of soldiers. The climax is an odd business, as Boyle shows off the rustier tricks of the horror genre—the swinging lamp, the pelting storm, the sudden face at the window—like a

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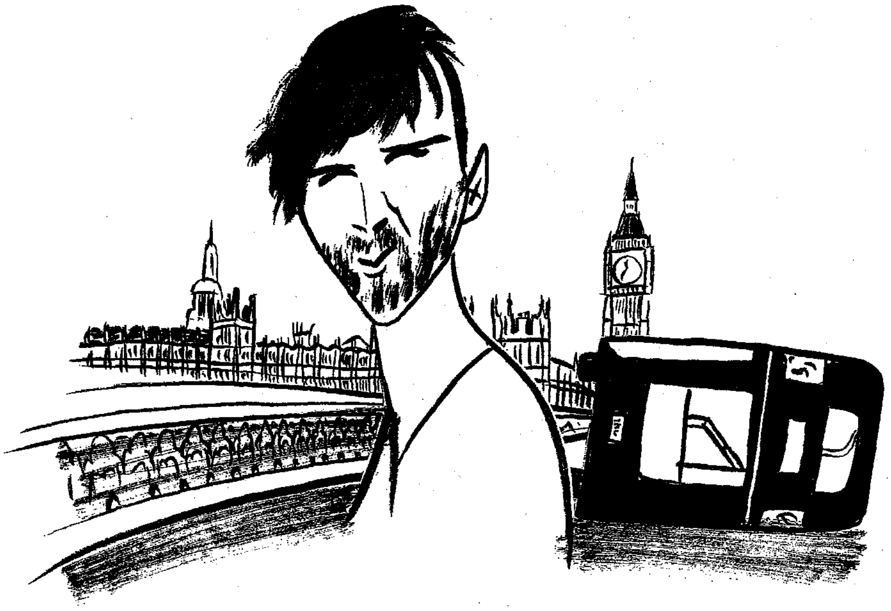
used-car salesman taking us out for a spin. There are two drawbacks here. One is a shortage of superior zombies, although where one goes to rent extra zombies I have no idea. Whatever the case, Boyle cannot begin to match the remorseless ranks of walleyed staggerers who parade through George Romero's "Night of the Living Dead."

Second, we have a serious shortage of fright. The setup is gruesome enough, but Boyle's visual habits are those of larky black comedy, and you cannot hope to horrify unless you learn to linger—to pause patiently while monstrosity looms. From the start, Boyle and his editor, Chris Gill, chop and chivy the images along, and they don't even realize that, when Jim calls for help in a desolate London, he is actually crying out for a slow tracking shot. The one thing in "28 Days Later" that got to me was the opening sequence, in which we meet the laboratory chimps who initially harbor the disease. One of them is strapped to a chair and forced to watch clips of human folly—fights, beatings, and other common malignities. Here is a dreadfully ripe and pessimistic thought: Did the chimps become infected by a dose of concentrated mankind? Could we be wiped out by the virus of ourselves?

For anybody who already knows the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the new documentary about him, entitled simply "Bonhoeffer," will provide little in the way of fresh information. That is no reason not to see it; the events of his life, not least its momentous end, will bear constant retelling, and there is always the fascination of studying him in photographs—the fair, unflappable fellow with the body of a boxer and the bespectacled gaze of a reliable family doctor.

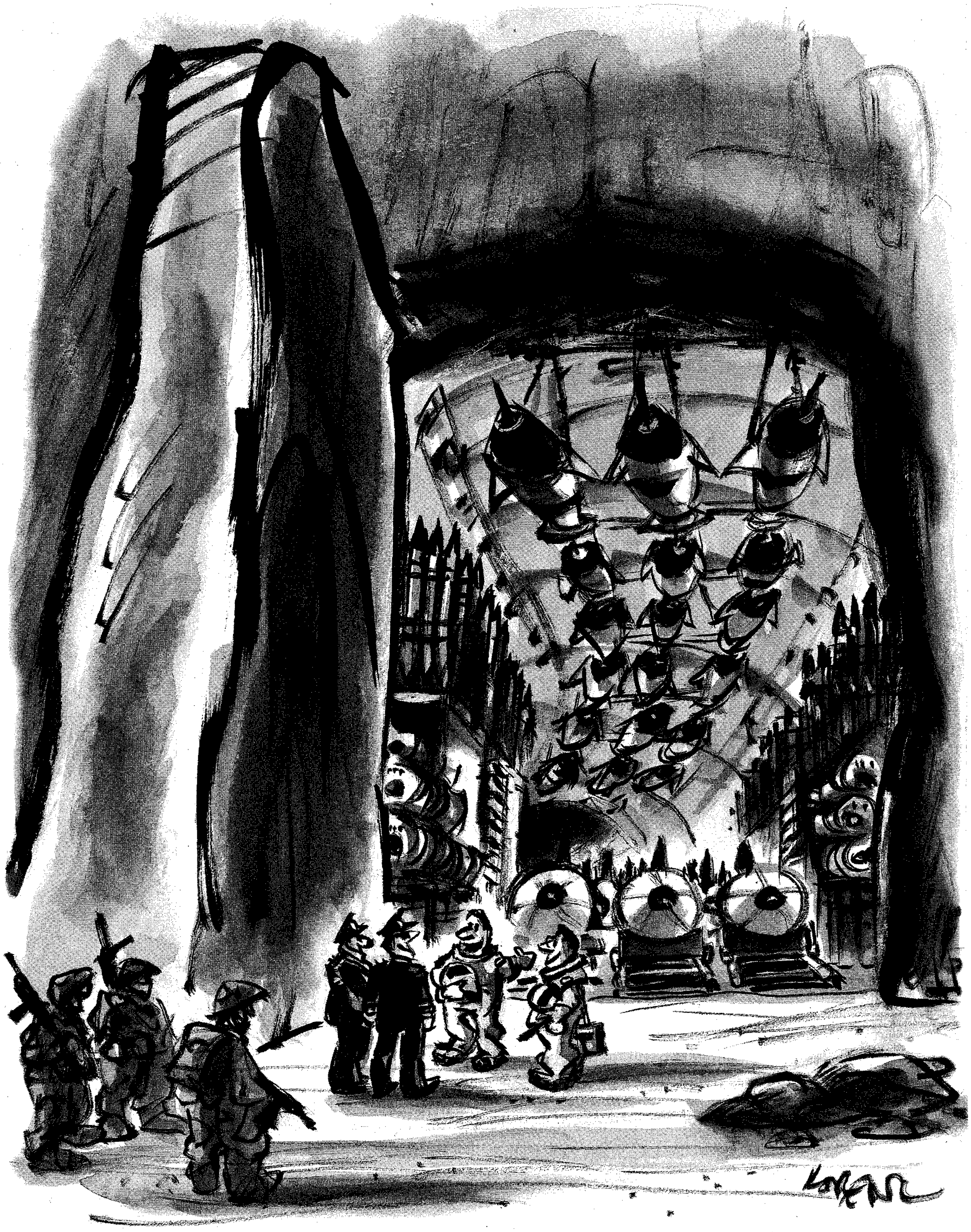
He was neither. Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau, Germany, on February 4, 1906, ten minutes before his twin sister, Sabine. In all, there were eight children, part of a comfortable clan—conservative in conduct, yet liberal (and notably secular) in belief. The family was surprised when Dietrich chose to read theology at Tübingen and Berlin, and to be ordained as a Lutheran minister. Two days after Hitler came to power, in 1933, Bonhoeffer gave a radio talk on leadership, and was cut off in mid-flow. From then on, in contrast to many in the church, he saw grounds for nothing but dissent, complaint, and, eventually, conspiracy against the irreligious excesses of the state. (As if to prove what he had to contend with, the documentary includes a shot of black-robed pastors lined up to give the Nazi salute.) His most celebrated writings are to be found in "The Cost of Discipleship" (1937) and the posthumously published "Ethics" (1949). Bonhoeffer was party to the planning of various attempts on Hitler's life. He was arrested and imprisoned, in Berlin, in 1943, and later charged with "anti-war activities." On the morning of April 9, 1945, he was hanged in the Flossenbürg concentration camp, "naked under the scaffold in the sweet spring woods," in the words of one account.

"Bonhoeffer," directed by Martin Doblmeier, has a strong sequence on Bonhoeffer in New York, which he visited twice: once in 1930 and again in 1939, before the outbreak of war. (It would have been easy to remain, but, as he said, "I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people.") Never wholly at ease in America, he was made most welcome in Harlem, where he acquired a taste for spirituals, which he insisted on teaching to the bemused faithful back home. Above all, "Bonhoeffer" gives us a chance—in some cases, a last chance—to observe those who were fortunate enough to be supporting players in the drama. Here, for instance, is Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer's closest friend and best biographer, filmed shortly before his death, three years ago; he reads aloud from one of the extraordinary letters he received from prison, in which Bonhoeffer issued a general instruction to "throw ourselves completely into the arms of God." Here, too, is Ruth Alice von Bismarck—the sister of Maria von Wedemeyer, who was engaged to Bonhoeffer—recalling Maria's visit to her jailed fiancé. The couple were forbidden to touch, ordered to speak out loud, and, after half an hour, led away through different doors. Then, suddenly, "Maria turned on her heel and ran to him before anybody could stop her and put her arms round his neck." Note, in both cases, the intense physicality of the phrasing—the rapturous throwing of body and soul alike. That suits Bonhoeffer, who emerges from this movie, and from all reports of him, as possessing a preternatural worldliness. From boyhood to martyrdom, he was excellent company, a big laugher, and a fine musician, whose confidence in the life to come lent lustre and vigor to his capacity for the life of the moment. In jail, he befriended not just his fellow-inmates but his captors, who, according to Bethge, "tried to arrange the rota of duties so that they were allotted that section of the corridor where Bonhoeffer's cell was." At one point in the film, we see a prison photograph in which Bonhoeffer's calmness, as usual, irradiates the scene. By his side, a Nazi officer is smiling. ♦



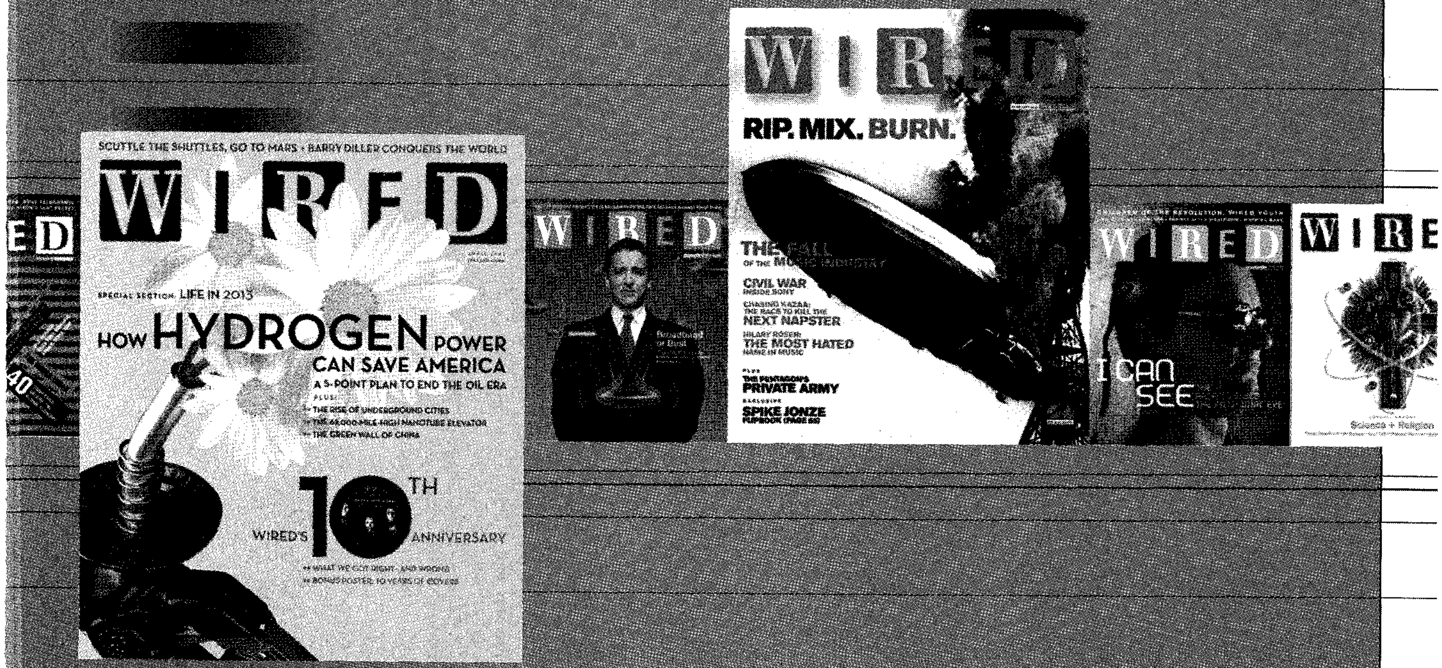
Cillian Murphy evades zombies in Danny Boyle's new movie.

THE BACK PAGE BY LEE LORENZ



"I just said, 'Open sesame,' and there they were."

Know the future.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CHASING KAZAA: THE RACE TO KILL THE NEXT NAPSTER
HILARY ROSEN: THE MOST HATED NAME IN MUSIC
PLUS THE PENTAGON'S PRIVATE ARMY
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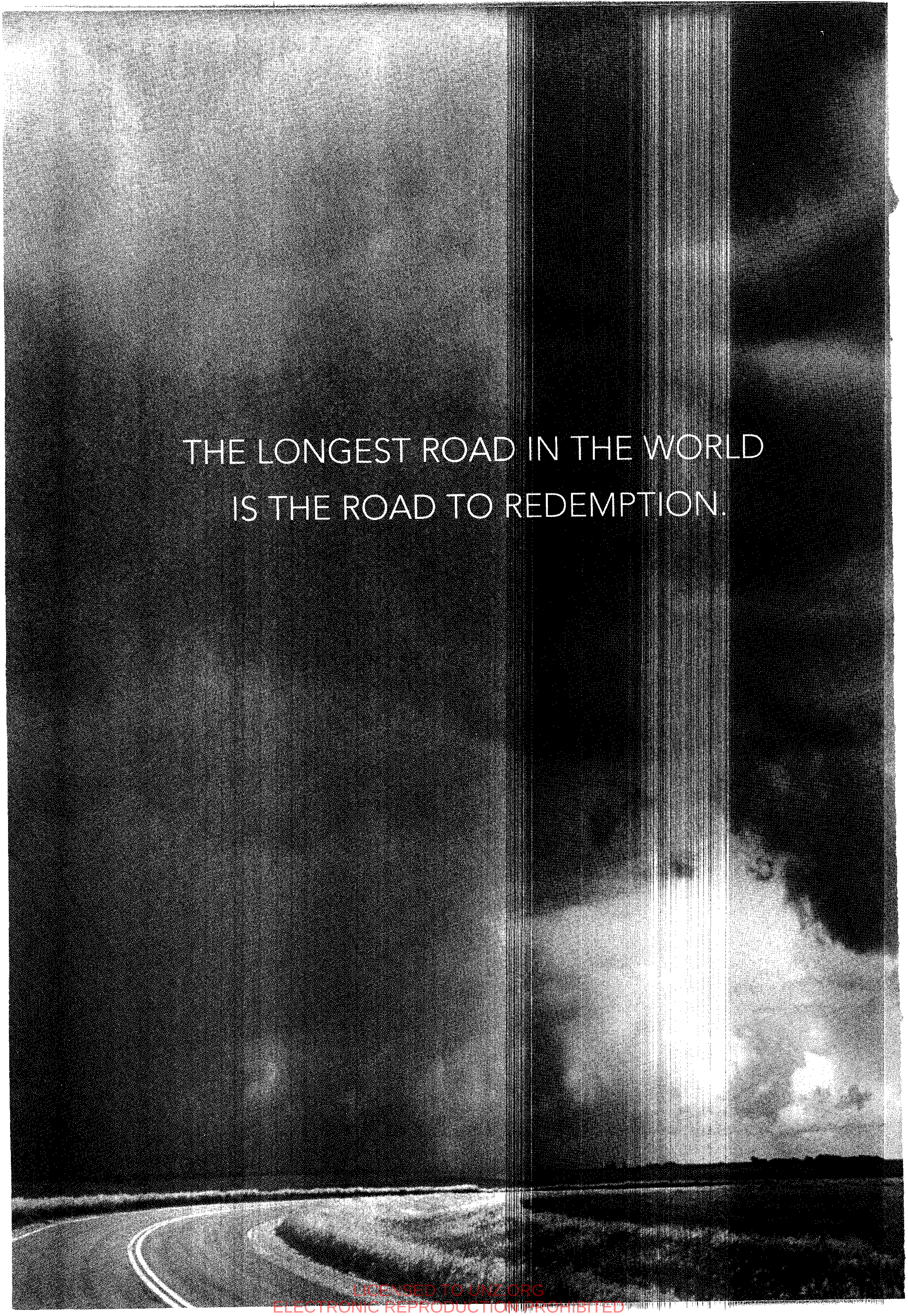


THE LONGEST ROAD IN THE WORLD
IS THE ROAD TO REDEMPTION.

THIRTY YEARS AGO, GM QUALITY WAS THE BEST IN THE WORLD. TWENTY YEARS AGO, IT WASN'T. THE STORY OF OUR LONG JOURNEY BACK.

GM presents an overnight success story, a decade in the making.

Ten years ago, we had a choice. We could keep looking in the rearview mirror, or out at the road ahead.

It was the easiest decision we ever made.

The hard part meant breaking out of our own bureaucratic gridlock. Learning some humbling lessons from our competitors. And instilling a true culture of quality in every division, in every department, in every corner of the company.

Today, with quality at the core of our values, we're building the best cars and trucks in our history. GM is now challenging the automotive world in fuel efficiency, advanced emissions controls, styling and design, and manufacturing productivity.

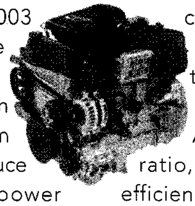
It didn't start yesterday. And it doesn't happen overnight. But last year we launched over twenty new models on the way to posting our second straight year of market share gains. And a whole lot of you rediscovered that an American car can be a great car.

The road to redemption has no finish line. But it does have a corner.

And it's fair to say we've turned it.

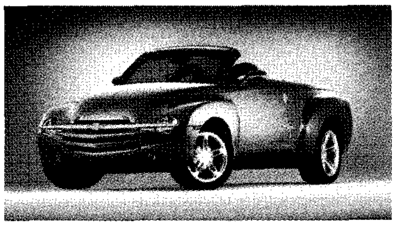
HOW SIX CYLINDERS DELIVER THE POWER OF A V8

The 4.2-liter GM Vortec 4200 Inline 6, found in every 2003 mid-size SUV, delivers the horsepower of a V8 with only six cylinders. We used an all-aluminum composition and simplified design to reduce weight. We packed both power and punch with 4 valves per cylinder, dual overhead cams and variable valve timing – features rarely found in competitive V8s. And with a 10:1 compression ratio, its cylinders fire with the efficiency of a racecar.

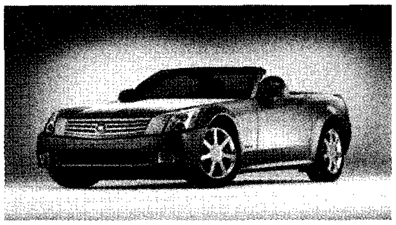


The road back began at dawn. GM's culture of quality started with a literal wake-up call. In a series of mandatory six a.m. meetings, the gospel was spread throughout the company. Ten very painful but very productive years later, GM is now delivering:

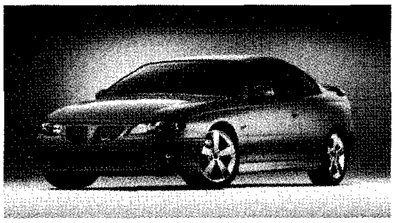
- ■ Industry leading emissions controls, using the least amount of precious metals.
- ■ More return customers than any other car manufacturer in the world.[1]
- ■ The top two automotive assembly plants in North/South America in the J.D. Power and Associates Initial Quality Study.℠ [2]
- ■ 149 automotive awards in 2002.



Coming this summer: The rule-breaking, game-changing Chevy SSR.*



Coming this summer: Elegance and muscle co-mingle in the exhilarating Cadillac XLR.*



Coming this fall: The legendary Pontiac GTO roars back with a 5.7-liter V8.*

The latest news, reviews and a glimpse of the road ahead. See it all at www.gm.com/story.

GM

CHEVROLET PONTIAC OLDSMOBILE BUICK CADILLAC GMC SATURN HUMMER SAAB

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[1] According to R.L. Polk & Co., statistics for Overall Manufacturer Loyalty in 2002 model year, GM ranked highest by having the greatest percentage of households return to purchase or lease another GM vehicle. [2] The General Motors Corporation Oshawa #1, Ontario plant was ranked highest and the Lansing, Grand River, MI plant was ranked second highest in North/South America among plants producing vehicles for the U.S. market in J.D. Power and Associates 2003 Initial Quality Study.℠ Study based on a total of 52,105 U.S. consumer responses indicating owner reported problems during the first 90 days of ownership. www.jdpower.com. *Limited availability. See dealer for details.

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